Los Angeles Times

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Trump blamed over Afghan chaos

Review of American troops' withdrawal says policies 'severely constrained' Biden.

By Zeke Miller and Nomaan Merchant

WASHINGTON — President Biden's administration on Thursday laid the blame on his predecessor, President Trump, for the deadly and chaotic 2021 withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan that brought about some of the darkest moments of Biden's presidency.

The White House publicly released a 12-page summary of the results of the "hotwash" of U.S. policies around the ending of the nation's longest war, taking little responsibility for its own actions and asserting that Biden was "severely constrained" by Trump's decisions.

It does acknowledge that the evacuation of Americans and allies from Afghanistan should have started sooner, but blames the delays on the Afghan government and military, and on U.S. military and intelligence community assessments.

The brief document was drafted by the National Security Council, rather than by an independent entity, with input from Biden. The administration said detailed reviews conducted by the State Department and the Pentagon, which the White House said would be transmitted privately to Congress on Thursday, were highly classified and would not be released publicly.

"President Biden's choices for how to execute a withdrawal from Afghan-

[See **Afghanistan,** A4]

Genaro Molina Los Angeles Times

'IT'S BECOME THE NORM HERE'

Shelle stands near her tent a few blocks from where three people were found dead of drug overdoses, possibly fentanyl-related, at 649 Lofts. Skid row residents are calling for action. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

L.A. sues journalist, activists to claw back photos of officers

By Kevin Rector, Libor Jany and Richard Winton

In a move immediately denounced as legally meritless by 1st Amendment and media rights experts, the city of Los Angeles has sued a local journalist and an activist group over the online publication of undercover LAPD officers' pictures — images the city had itself provided.

Attorneys for the city say the release of the images in response to a public records request and related litigation by Knock LA journalist Ben Camacho was "inadvertent" and posed a safety risk to the officers. Camacho subsequently provided the images to the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, which published them online.

"The City seeks the return of these inadvertently produced photos to protect the lives and work of these undercover officers," the city's attorneys wrote.

Both Knock LA and the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition denounced the lawsuit in separate statements. Knock LA, a nonprofit online newsroom, called it a "clear intimidation tactic" by City Atty. Hydee Feldstein Soto. The Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, a technology oversight group advocating for police abolishment, called it "an attack on

[See **Lawsuit,** A12]

Brian van der Brug Los Angeles Times

AN LAPD recruit in 2010. Mayor Karen Bass says she fears the scandal will prompt more cops to quit.

Another booster vaccine may be coming

Federal officials weigh OKing a COVID shot for spring, but interest has been waning.

By Rong-Gong Lin II, Luke Money and Sean Greene

As government officials close the book on the emergency phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, health authorities are turning their attention to the next chapter of the vaccination campaign.

Though nothing is etched in stone, federal officials are considering the authorization of another booster shot this spring.

The timing of that decision — and who would be eligible — remains unclear. But for older residents or those with underlying health conditions that make them more likely to develop a severe COVID-19 illness, another booster could provide peace of mind and an additional jolt of protection.

"Lots of people at higher risk are asking whether or not they need another dose. And we're waiting for guidance on that," Los Angeles County Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer said.

Authorities in Britain have already greenlighted a spring booster shot — but only for nursing home residents, seniors 75 or older or those who are immunosuppressed and at least 5 years old.

"This year's spring program will bridge the gap to the planned booster program in the autumn, enabling those who are most vulnerable to be well-protected throughout the summer," Dr. Wei Shen Lim, chair of Britain's Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunization, said in a statement.

Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization is suggesting a similar approach: making a spring booster available for those 65 or older as well as immunosuppressed adults and nursing home residents.

It remains to be seen how much of an appetite there could be for an additional booster in the U.S. In California, 45% of vaccinated seniors have received the updated booster shot. Among all age groups, only 25% of eligible Californians — that is, people who have completed their primary vaccination series — have rolled up their sleeves since the updated bivalent doses became available in Septem-

[See **Shots,** A6]

Jacquelyn Martin Associated Press

PROTECTING TRANS ATHLETES

The Biden administration released a proposal Thursday that would prohibit schools and colleges from the outright banning of trans athletes. In Washington, people attend a Transgender Day of Visibility rally last week. **NATION, A7**

Latino Caucus is a force 50 years on. And the future?

California legislative group faces pressure to broaden its focus to draw younger voters.

By Vanessa Arredondo

When Martha Escutia was elected to the Assembly in 1992, she was one of seven Latinos in the 120-member California Legislature, part of the small but growing Latino Caucus that would eventually become a powerful force in the state Capitol.

Escutia came in during the "Year of the Woman," when U.S. Senate victories by California Democrats Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer highlighted the wave of women winning seats in Congress. She was one of only three Latinas who held office in the Legislature.

"We would always tease each other saying that [the Latino Caucus] could probably fit in a phone booth," she said.

By 1996, the California Latino Legislative Caucus had doubled to 14. Today, there are 38 members, 21 of whom are women.

Formed in 1973 as a group that welcomes only Democrats, the Latino Caucus has championed policies to improve healthcare access for immigrants, allow college students without documentation to pay in-state tuition and create an ethnic studies requirement to graduate high school, among other groundbreaking policies in its 50 years of existence.

Now, an established force in the Legislature, the caucus is facing pressure to refocus its priorities to appeal to a new generation of voters. Escutia, who pushed immi-

[See **Caucus,** A9]

Kent Nishimura Los Angeles Times

THE LATINO Caucus has produced influential California political leaders like Sen. Alex Padilla, right.

Justices reject bid to ban trans pupil from girls' team

By David G. Savage

WASHINGTON — In its first decision involving transgender students and sports, the Supreme Court on Thursday refused West Virginia's bid to bar a 12-year-old transgender girl from competing on the girls' track team at her middle school.

With two conservatives in dissent, the court turned down an emergency appeal from the state's lawyers, who were defending a 2021 law that would classify students based on how their sex was labeled at birth, rather than how they identify.

A federal appeals court had put the measure on hold while it considered legal and constitutional challenges to it.

The court gave no explanation for its decision, but Justices Samuel A. Alito Jr. and Clarence Thomas said they would have put the law into effect.

While the court's action sets no precedent, it sends a signal that the justices are not ready to quickly approve laws that discriminate against transgender people.

California and 21 other mostly Democratic states forbid discrimination against transgender students.

The West Virginia law was similar to measures in 17 Republican-led states that focus on how a student's gender was identified at birth.

[See **Transgender,** A7]

NO GIFTS TO REPORT: Justice Clarence Thomas is still taking lavish trips at a GOP donor's expense, but he's not disclosing them, ProPublica says. **NATION, A6**

Tennessee GOP ousts Democrats

Republican-dominated House banishes pair of lawmakers who were involved in a gun control protest. **NATION, A5**

Biden seeks to give EVs a push

His pollution rules are expected to target car tailpipe emissions from model years 2027 to 2032. **BUSINESS, A8**

Ohtani's price looks ginormous

Official thinks Angels two-way star could be first $600-million man during baseball's free agency. **SPORTS, B10**

Weather
Mostly sunny.
L.A. Basin: 69/51. **B6**

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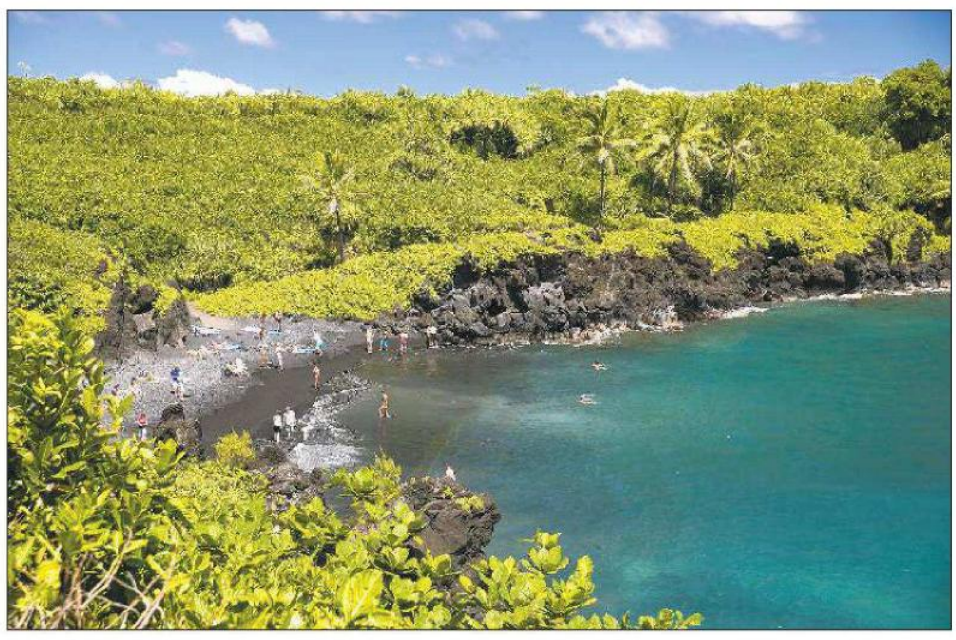
VISIT…

Hawaii weighs fee to mitigate crush of ecotourism

Lawmakers propose requiring tourists to pay for a yearlong license or pass to visit state parks and trails.

By Audrey McAvoy



Marco Garcia Associated Press

BEACHGOERS at the state park in Hana, Hawaii. According to a 2019 report, conservation spending amounted to $535 million, but the need is much greater.

HONOLULU — Repairing coral reefs after boats run aground. Shielding native forest trees from a killer fungus outbreak. Patrolling waters for swimmers harassing dolphins and turtles.

Taking care of Hawaii's unique natural environment takes time, people and money. Now Hawaii wants tourists to help pay for it, especially because growing numbers are traveling to the islands to enjoy the beauty of its outdoors — including some lured by dramatic vistas they've seen on social media.

"All I want to do, honestly, is to make travelers accountable and have the capacity to help pay for the impact that they have," Democratic Gov. Josh Green said this year. "We get between 9 and 10 million visitors a year [but] we only have 1.4 million people living here. Those 10 million travelers should be helping us sustain our environment."

Hawaii lawmakers are considering legislation that would require tourists to pay for a yearlong license or pass to visit state parks and trails. They're still debating how much they would charge.

The governor campaigned last year on a platform of having all tourists pay a $50 fee to enter the state. Legislators think this would violate U.S. constitutional protections for free travel and have promoted their parks and trails approach instead. Either policy would be a first of its kind for any U.S. state.

Hawaii's leaders are following the example of other tourism hot spots that have imposed similar fees or taxes. The Pacific island nation of Palau, for example, charges arriving international passengers $100 to help it manage a marine sanctuary and promote ecotourism.

State Rep. Sean Quinlan, a Democrat who chairs the House Tourism Committee, said changing traveler patterns are one reason behind Hawaii's push. He said golf rounds per visitor per day have declined 30% over the last decade while hiking has increased 50%. People are also seeking out once-obscure sites they've seen someone post on social media. The state doesn't have the money to manage all these places, he said.

"It's not like it was 20 years ago when you bring your family and you hit maybe one or two famous beaches and you go see Pearl Harbor. And that's the extent of it," Quinlan said. "These days it's like, well, you know, 'I saw this post on Instagram and there's this beautiful rope swing, a coconut tree.'

"All these places that didn't have visitors now have visitors," he said.

Most state parks and trails are currently free. Some of the most popular ones already charge, such as Diamond Head State Monument, which features a trail leading from the floor of a 300,000-year-old volcanic crater up to its summit. It gets 1 million visitors each year and costs $5 for each traveler.

A bill before the state House would require nonresidents 15 years and older visiting forests, parks, trails or "other natural area on state land" to buy an annual license online or via mobile app. Violators would pay a civil fine, though penalties wouldn't be imposed during a five-year education and transition period.

Residents with a Hawaii driver's license or other state identification would be exempt.

The Senate passed a version of the measure setting the fee at $50. But the House Finance Committee amended it last week to delete the dollar amount. Chair Kyle Yamashita, a Democrat, said the bill was "a work in progress."

Dawn Chang, chair of the state Board of Land and Natural Resources, told the committee that Hawaii's beaches are open to the public, so people probably would not be cited there — and details still need to be worked out.

Green has indicated that he's flexible about where the fee is imposed and that he's willing to support the Legislature's approach.

Supporters say that no other place in the U.S. imposes a similar fee on visitors. The closest equivalent may be the $34.50 tax that Alaska charges each cruise ship passenger.

Hawaii's conservation needs are great. Invasive pests are attacking the state's forests, including a fungal disease that is killing ohia, a tree unique to the state that makes up the largest portion of the canopy in native wet forests.

Some conservation work directly responds to tourism. The harassment of wildlife such as dolphins, turtles and Hawaiian monk seals is a recurring problem. Hikers can unknowingly bring invasive species into the forest on their boots. Snorkelers and boats trample on coral, adding stress to reefs.

A 2019 report by Conservation International, a nonprofit environmental organization, estimated that total government and private spending on conservation in Hawaii amounted to $535 million but that the need was $886 million.

At the Diamond Head trail recently, some visitors said the fee would make the most sense for people who come to Hawaii often or who might be staying for several weeks. Some said $50 was too high, especially for those who view a walk through nature as a low-cost activity.

"For a large family that wants to have the experience with the kids, that would be a lot of money," said Sarah Tripp, who was visiting Hawaii with her husband and two of their three children from Marquette, Mich.

Katrina Kain, an English teacher visiting from Puerto Rico, said she thought the fee would "sting" some people but would be fine so long as it was well-advertised.

"If tourists were informed about it, then they would be OK with it," she said. "If that was a surprise $50 fee, it would be a pretty lousy surprise."

The legislation says proceeds would go into a "visitor impact fee special fund" managed by the state Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Carissa Cabrera, project manager for the Hawaii Green Fee, a coalition of nonprofit groups supporting the measure, said this would ensure the state has money for conservation regardless of budget swings.

Mufi Hanneman, president and chief executive of the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Assn., backs the bill but said Hawaii must monitor how the money is used.

"The last thing that you want to see is restrooms that haven't been fixed ... and year in, year out it remains the same and people are paying a fee," Hannemann said.

McAvoy writes for the Associated Press.

Officer on Putin's security team defects, calling him a 'war criminal'

By Erika Kinetz

LONDON — On Oct. 14, a Russian engineer named Gleb Karakulov boarded a flight from Kazakhstan to Turkey with his wife and daughter. He switched off his phone to shut out the crescendo of urgent, enraged messages, said goodbye to his life in Russia and tried to calm his fast-beating heart.

But this was no ordinary Russian defector. Karakulov was an officer in President Vladimir Putin's secretive elite personal security service — one of the few Russians to flee and go public who have rank, as well as knowledge of intimate details of Putin's life and potentially classified information.

Karakulov, who was responsible for secure communications, said moral opposition to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and his fear of dying there drove him to speak out, despite the risks to himself and his family.

"Our president has become a war criminal," he said. "It's time to end this war and stop being silent."

Karakulov's account generally conforms with others that paint the Russian president as a once charismatic but increasingly isolated leader, who doesn't use a cellphone or the internet and insists on access to Russian state television wherever he goes.

He also offered new details about how Putin's paranoia appears to have deepened since his decision to invade Ukraine in February 2022. Putin now prefers to avoid airplanes and travels on a special armored train, he said, and he ordered a bunker at the Russian Embassy in Kazakhstan outfitted with a secure communications line in October — the first time Karakulov had ever fielded such a request.

Associated Press

GLEB KARAKULOV offers a picture of a paranoid Russian president.

A defection like Karakulov's "has a very great level of interest," said an official with a security background from a NATO country, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive political matters.

"That would be seen as a very serious blow to the president himself because he is extremely keen on his security, and his security is compromised," he said.

The Kremlin did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

As an engineer in a field unit of the presidential communications department of the Federal Protective Service, or FSO, Karakulov was responsible for setting up secure communications for the Russian president and prime minister wherever they went. While he was not a confidant of Putin's, Karakulov spent years in his service, observing him from unusually close quarters from 2009 through late 2022.

Karakulov, his wife and his child have gone underground, and it was impossible to speak with them directly due to security constraints.

The Dossier Center, a London-based investigative group funded by Russian opposition figure Mikhail Khodorkovsky, interviewed Karakulov multiple times and shared video and transcripts of more than six hours of those interviews with the Associated Press, as well as Swedish Television, or SVT, and Danish and Norwegian broadcasting companies DR and NRK. The Dossier Center confirmed the authenticity of Karakulov's passport and FSO work identity card, and cross-checked details of his biography against Russian government records, leaked personal data and social media postings, all of which the AP reviewed.

The AP also independently confirmed Karakulov's identity with three sources in the U.S. and Europe and corroborated his personal details, including passport numbers, date and place of birth, two registered addresses, and the names and ages of family members. The AP was unable to verify all details of his defection.

The AP also confirmed that Karakulov is listed as a wanted man in the Russian Interior Ministry's public database of criminal suspects. The Interior Ministry initiated a criminal investigation against him on Oct. 26 for desertion during a time of military mobilization, according to documents obtained by the Dossier Center and seen by the AP.

The FSO is one of the most secretive branches of Russia's security services.

"Even when they quit, they never talk, but they know a lot of details of the private life of the president and the prime minister," said Katya Hakim, a senior researcher at the Dossier Center.

Karakulov moved as part of an advance team, often with enough specialized communications equipment to fill a Kamaz truck. He said he has taken more than 180 trips with the Russian president, and contrary to widespread speculation, Putin appears to be in better shape than most people his age. Putin has canceled only a few trips due to illness, he said.

Unlike the prime minister, Putin does not require secure internet access on his trips, Karakulov said.

"I have never seen him with a mobile phone," he said. "All the information he receives is only from people close to him. That is, he lives in a kind of information vacuum."

His work brought Karakulov to luxury hotels for summits, beach resorts in Cuba, yachts — and aboard a special armored train outfitted for the Russian president.

Putin did not like the fact that airplanes can be tracked, preferring the stealth of a nondescript train car, Karakulov said.

"I understand that he's simply afraid," he said.

Putin began to use the train regularly in the run-up to the February 2022 invasion, Karakulov said. Even last year, Putin continued to insist on strict anti-COVID measures, and FSO employees took shifts in two-week quarantine so there would always be a pool of people cleared to travel with Putin on the train, he said.

Putin has set up identical offices in multiple locations, with matching details down to the desk and wall hangings, and official reports sometimes say he's one place when he is actually in another, according to Karakulov and prior reporting by a Russian media outlet.

When Putin was in Sochi, security officials would deliberately pretend he was leaving, bringing in a plane and sending off a motorcade, when he was in fact staying, Karakulov said.

"I think that this is an attempt to confuse, first, intelligence, and second, so that there are no assassination attempts," he said.

His defection was a surprising turn for a family steeped in patriotic military tradition. Karakulov's father is a former military man, and his brother is a local government official.

Karakulov said he couldn't tell his parents about his disillusionment because their minds had been molded by years of watching Russian state television. So he never told them he was leaving. But he denies that he is unpatriotic and urged others to break their silence to stop the war.

"Patriotism is when you love your country," he said. "In this case, our homeland needs to be saved because something crazy and terrible is happening."

Kinetz writes for the Associated Press. AP reporters Aamer Madhani in Washington, Jamey Keaton in Geneva and Joanna Kozlowska in London contributed to this report.

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Tensions rise at Passover as rocket fire hits Israel

Militants' salvo from Lebanon and Gaza after police storming of mosque raises fears of a wider conflict.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ARIEL SCHALIT Associated Press

A MAN inspects damage to a shopping center from an intercepted rocket fired from Lebanon on Thursday in Shlomi, Israel. The military said its aerial defense system had shot down 25 rockets fired across the border.

JERUSALEM — Militants fired a barrage of rockets from Lebanon at Israel on Thursday, the Israeli military said, forcing people across Israel's northern frontier into bomb shelters, wounding at least one person and ratcheting up regional tensions as the nation celebrated the Jewish Passover holiday.

Israel's military said 34 rockets had been fired across the border, and that 25 were shot down by its Iron Dome aerial defense system. Five more fell inside Israeli territory and the rest were being investigated, it added. The army said its response would come after "a situational assessment" and meeting by Israel's security Cabinet later Thursday.

The Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah holds power in much of southern Lebanon, a flashpoint with Israeli forces. Thursday's rocket fire raised fears of a wider conflagration. Over the last two days, tensions have already skyrocketed at Jerusalem's most prominent holy site and along Israel's border with the Gaza Strip.

The United Nations peacekeeping force in south Lebanon, known as UNIFIL, said in a statement that there had been "multiple rocket launches from southern Lebanon toward Israel" and that the Israeli army had informed UNIFIL of the activation of its Iron Dome defense system in response.

"The current situation is extremely serious," said Maj. Gen. Aroldo Lázaro, the head of the peacekeeping force, adding that he had been in touch with both Lebanese and Israeli authorities. "UNIFIL urges restraint and to avoid further escalation."

Earlier on Thursday and late Wednesday night, Palestinian militants in Gaza had fired rockets toward Israel in protest over an escalation in tensions and clashes at the holy Al Aqsa Mosque compound in the heart of Jerusalem's Old City.

No faction in Lebanon claimed responsibility for the salvo of rockets, which set off air-raid sirens across Israel's north. Israeli media estimated the barrage to be larger than previous launches from Lebanon in recent years.

Lebanese security officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media, said the rockets had been fired from the area of a Palestinian refugee camp — suggesting the rockets had been fired at Israel by Palestinian militants based in Lebanon.

Israel and Hezbollah fought a monthlong war in 2006 that ended inconclusively. Since then, the border has remained tense but mostly calm. Palestinian militants have also launched rockets into Israel on several occasions, drawing quick but limited Israeli retaliation.

Israeli medics reported that a 19-year-old man was hit by shrapnel and mildly wounded, while a 60-year-old woman was injured after falling as she sprinted to a bomb shelter.

Videos on social media showed massive plumes of dark smoke billowing from Israel's northern hills and streaks through the sky left by the Iron Dome system. Widely circulating photos showed shrapnel that struck a street in the northern Israeli town of Shlomi and at least one building with its windows blown out.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported that Israeli tanks along the border fired shells toward two southern Lebanese towns near the Rashidieh Palestinian refugee camp in retaliation — a claim denied by the Israeli military.

The Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad hailed the rockets as "a heroic operation against the Israeli crimes in the Al Aqsa Mosque." The leader of the Palestinian Hamas group that rules Gaza, Ismail Haniyeh, also arrived in Beirut on Wednesday, Lebanese state media reported.

The Al Aqsa Mosque compound is the third-holiest site in Islam and stands on a hilltop known to Jews as the Temple Mount, revered as the holiest site in Judaism. Conflicting claims over the site have spilled into violence before, including a bloody 11-day war two years ago between Israel and Hamas.

For the last two nights — a volatile time during which the Islamic holy month of Ramadan and the Jewish holiday of Passover overlap — Palestinians have tried to barricade themselves in the mosque in protest over threats by religious Jews to sacrifice animals at the sacred site and over perceived Israeli restrictions on Islamic prayers.

Palestinians have been trying to pray overnight at the mosque, which authorities typically permit only during the last 10 days of Ramadan.

In the last few days, Israeli police have stormed into the mosque to evict worshipers, firing tear gas and stun grenades and fiercely beating Palestinians, who set off firecrackers and hurled stones. Israeli authorities control access to the area, but the compound is administered by Islamic and Jordanian officials.

Hezbollah condemned the storming of the mosque, calling it "a flagrant violation of believers in Jerusalem" that breached religious, moral and human values.

Muslim leaders around the Middle East criticized the Israeli actions in Al Aqsa. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, whose country recently reconciled with Israel and restored full diplomatic ties, condemned the violence in a television interview late Wednesday.

"Interventions and threats against the historical status and spirituality of Al Aqsa Mosque as well as the Palestinians' right to life and religious beliefs must come to an end," Erdogan told Turkey's 24 TV.

Rowdy demonstrations again hit France, but with fewer protesters

Strikers continue to march against plans to raise the retirement age, leading to scenes of chaos in Paris.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JEREMIAS GONZALEZ Associated Press

A DEMONSTRATOR holds a flare during a protest Thursday in Nantes, France. The government deployed 11,500 police officers nationwide to try to avert clashes.

PARIS — Police fired clouds of tear gas against unruly protesters in Paris and other French cities Thursday as hundreds of thousands of people returned to streets across the country to vent anger against President Emmanuel Macron's contested pension reforms.

Macron's drive to raise the national retirement age to 64 from 62 has ignited a months-long firestorm of opposition. Talks between trade union leaders and Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne quickly collapsed Wednesday without a breakthrough, setting the stage for the fresh demonstrations that were largely peaceful but also punctuated by violence.

Trade unions vowed to keep up their resistance and called for another round of protests in a week. But labor strikes that have caused significant disruptions since January lost some of their bite, with fewer workers taking part.

The Paris Metro ran almost normally Thursday, in contrast with previous days of action. Fewer than 8% of teachers were on strike, according to the Education Ministry.

However, strikers again closed the Eiffel Tower, and the unions still managed to mobilize large crowds for protests across the country. The Interior Ministry said 570,000 people took part; unions said the figure was closer to 2 million.

There were chaotic scenes at the demonstration that wound through Paris' streets, leaving a trail of destruction. Police were pelted by projectiles when the march reached La Rotonde, a restaurant patronized by Macron during the 2017 presidential election.

Demonstrators employing so-called black bloc tactics also targeted banks, ripping down a protective wooden screen erected around one branch and smashing the windows before police dispersed them.

Police fired repeated volleys of tear gas and chased after protesters who set fires.

The CGT union estimated that 400,000 people joined the Paris protest, down from 450,000 the week before. The police estimate was far lower: 57,000. Officers detained at least 31 people in the capital. The Paris police force also reported dozens of injuries in its ranks.

Experts say protest violence, with scores of demonstrators and police hurt in 11 rounds of nationwide demonstrations since January, has turned off less activist segments of the population.

"The demonstrations have become more violent as they've gone on. That means many in France are now staying away," said Luc Rouban, a research director at the Paris university Sciences Po.

Paris marcher Khadija Philip disagreed that there was a drop in will, vowing "we won't give up as long as they haven't taken the time to hear us and reconsider their decision."

Elsewhere in France, largely peaceful crowds marched behind union flags and banners in Marseille on the Mediterranean coast, Bordeaux in the southwest, Lyon in the southeast and other cities. In the western city of Nantes, where rumbling tractors joined marchers, clouds of police tear gas were deployed.

The Interior Ministry deployed 11,500 police officers nationwide, including 4,200 in Paris, to try to avert the clashes and moments of vandalism that also had marred previous protests.

The months-long protest movement has failed to get Macron to change course. Critics accuse the government of inflaming demonstrators by not listening to them.

It's "a deep anger, a cold anger," said Sophie Binet, the newly elected general secretary of the CGT union.

In Paris, rat catchers hurled rodent cadavers at City Hall on Wednesday in one of the more memorable illustrations of how Macron's plans have stoked fury.

Natacha Pommet, a leader of the public services branch of the CGT union, said the rat catchers wanted "to show the hard reality of their mission."

At Paris' Charles de Gaulle Airport on Thursday, about 100 demonstrators blocked a road leading to Terminal 1 and entered the building, the airport operator said. It said flights were unaffected, but travelers had to weave past flag-waving protesters.

A CGT representative at the airport, Loris Foreman, told BFMTV that the demonstrators wanted "to show the world and Europe that we don't want to work to 64 years old."

Russian claims on Ukrainian kids disputed

U.S. says assertion by Moscow that they are safe is disinformation.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MIKHAIL METZEL Pool Photo

RUSSIAN Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova has been accused of abducting children from Ukraine.

UNITED NATIONS — Russia's commissioner for children's rights, who is being sought on war crimes charges for deporting children from Ukraine, said at a U.N. meeting Wednesday that they were taken for their safety and that Moscow is coordinating with international organizations to return them to their families.

Ambassadors from Western countries boycotted the informal Security Council meeting, sending low-level diplomats instead. And diplomats from the United States, Britain, Albania and Malta walked out when Maria Lvova-Belova began addressing the meeting by video link.

The International Criminal Court last month issued an arrest warrant for her and Russian President Vladimir Putin, accusing them of abducting children from Ukraine.

Russia, which holds the rotating presidency of the Security Council this month, called Wednesday's meeting to counter what it claims is disinformation about the Ukrainian children.

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told reporters before the meeting that the United States strongly opposed the briefing and joined the U.K. in blocking the United Nations from outside broadcast of the meeting.

Lvova-Belova should not be allowed "to have an international podium to spread disinformation and to try to defend her horrible actions that are taking place in Ukraine," Thomas-Greenfield said.

The Associated Press reported on Lvova-Belova's involvement in the abduction of Ukrainian orphans in October. The AP investigation found that the open effort to put Ukrainian children up for adoption in Russia was well underway. Ukrainian officials claimed at the time that nearly 8,000 children had been deported to Russia, but the exact number was difficult to determine.

Russia's ambassador to the U.N., Vassily Nebenzia, opened the meeting by saying its aim was "to unmask the blatant double standards of the West."

"Part of this propaganda campaign is the hushing up by the West of the fact that in European countries Ukrainian refugees are having their children taken away," he said. Videos were then shown of some women claiming their children had been taken in Europe.

Nebenzia also insisted that contrary to Western claims, there have been "no forced adoptions." He said some Ukrainian children are in foster care, and claimed there were "no obstacles" for them to maintain contact with their families in Ukraine.

The AP investigation found Russian officials deported Ukrainian children to Russia without their parents' consent, lied to them that they weren't wanted by their parents, used them for propaganda and gave them Russian families and citizenship.

Since Feb. 24, 2022, when Russia invaded Ukraine, Lvova-Belova said that Russia has taken in more than 5 million Ukrainians, including 700,000 children — all with parents, relatives or legal guardians except for 2,000 from orphanages in eastern Ukraine's Donbas region. To date, she said, about 1,300 children have been returned to their orphanages, 400 were sent to Russian orphanages and 358 were placed in foster homes.

Lvova-Belova said there has been no official communication with Ukrainian authorities about the children, but she said her office has met with representatives of UNICEF, Refugees International and the International Committee of the Red Cross and "we provide all available information about the situation of children."

"Now we're coordinating efforts with the Red Cross on reunification," she said.

Biden blames Trump for chaotic withdrawal

[**Afghanistan,** from A1]
istan were severely constrained by conditions created by his predecessor," the White House summary states, noting that when Biden entered office, "the Taliban were in the strongest military position that they had been in since 2001, controlling or contesting nearly half of the country."

Trump responded by accusing the Biden administration of playing "a new disinformation game" to distract from "their grossly incompetent SURRENDER in Afghanistan." On his social media site, he said, "Biden is responsible, no one else!"

The report does fault overly optimistic intelligence community assessments about the Afghan army's willingness to fight and says Biden followed military commanders' recommendations for the pacing of the drawdown of American forces.

"Clearly we didn't get it right," National Security Council spokesman John F. Kirby said Thursday, but he sidestepped questions about whether Biden has any regrets for his decisions and actions leading up to the withdrawal. Referring to the report, Kirby said "the purpose of it is not accountability," but rather "understanding" what happened to inform future decisions.

The White House asserts the mistakes of Afghanistan informed its handling of Ukraine, where the Biden administration has been credited for supporting Kyiv's defense against Russia's invasion. The White House says it simulated worst-case scenarios before the February 2022 invasion and moved to release intelligence about Moscow's intentions months beforehand.

"We now prioritize earlier evacuations when faced with a degrading security situation," the White House said.

In an apparent attempt to defend its national security decision-making, the Biden administration also notes that it released prewar warnings over "strong objections from senior officials in the Ukrainian government."

Republicans in Congress have sharply criticized the Afghanistan withdrawal, focusing on the deaths of 13 service members in a suicide bombing at Kabul's airport, which also killed more than 100 Afghans.

Shawn VanDiver, a Navy veteran and founder of #AfghanEvac, an effort to resettle Afghans fleeing the country, called the NSC report an "important next step."

"We are glad to see acknowledgement of lessons learned and are laser focused on continuing relocation and resettlement operations," VanDiver said in a statement.

But Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) tweeted Thursday that the withdrawal was "an unmitigated fiasco," adding, "Passing the buck in a blame-shifting report won't change that."

MARCUS YAM Los Angeles Times

THE U.S. summary on Americans' withdrawal from Afghanistan asserts that President Biden was "severely constrained" by his predecessor's decisions. Above, U.S. soldiers stand guard at Kabul airport on Aug. 25, 2021.

The administration's report appears to shift any blame in the Aug. 26, 2021, suicide bombing at Hamid Karzai International Airport, saying it was the U.S. military that made one possibly key decision.

"To manage the potential threat of a terrorist attack, the President repeatedly asked whether the military required additional support to carry out their mission at HKIA," the report states, adding: "Senior military officials confirmed that they had sufficient resources and authorities to mitigate threats."

Kirby credited U.S. forces for their actions in running the largest airborne evacuation of noncombatants in history during the chaos of Kabul's fall.

"They ended our nation's longest war," he told reporters. "That was never going to be an easy thing to do. And as the president himself has said, it was never going to be low grade or low risk or low cost."

Since the U.S. withdrawal, Biden has blamed the February 2020 agreement Trump reached with the Taliban in Doha, Qatar, saying it boxed the U.S. into leaving Afghanistan. The agreement has been blamed by analysts for undercutting the U.S.-backed government, which collapsed the following year.

Under the Doha agreement, roughly 5,000 Taliban prisoners were released as a condition of peace talks between the Kabul government and the Taliban. Kirby noted that release and other examples of what he said was a "general sense of degradation and neglect" inherited by Biden.

But the agreement also gave the U.S. the right to withdraw from the accord if Afghan peace talks failed — which they did.

The U.S. was to remove all forces by May 1, 2021. Biden pushed a full withdrawal to September but declined to delay further, saying it would prolong a war that had long needed to end.

After the withdrawal, the U.S. carried out a successful operation to kill Al Qaeda chief Ayman Zawahiri — the group's No. 2 leader during the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks — which the White House has argued is proof it can still deter terrorist groups in Afghanistan.

But the images of disorder and violence during the fall of Kabul still reverberate, including scenes of Afghans falling from the undercarriages of American planes, Afghan families handing infants over airport gates to save them from the crush and violence of the crowd, and the devastation after the suicide bombing at the Abbey Gate.

A February report by the U.S. government's special inspector for Afghanistan placed the most immediate blame for the Afghan military's collapse on both the Trump and Biden administrations, and cited the speed with which Biden insisted on carrying out the withdrawal: "Due to the [Afghan security force's] dependency on U.S. military forces, the decision to withdraw all U.S. military personnel and dramatically reduce U.S. support to the [Afghan security forces] destroyed the morale of Afghan soldiers and police."

Pressed by reporters Thursday afternoon, Kirby repeatedly defended the U.S. response and effort to withdraw American citizens and argued with reporters who referred to the withdrawal as chaotic. At one point, he paused in what appeared to be an effort to gather his emotions.

"For all this talk of chaos, I just didn't see it, not from my perch," said Kirby, who was the Pentagon spokesman during the withdrawal. "At one point during the evacuation, there was an aircraft taking off full of people, Americans and Afghans alike, every 48 minutes, and not one single mission was missed. So I'm sorry, I just won't buy the whole argument of chaos."

The release of the National Security Council review comes as the State Department and House Republicans battle over documents for classified cables related to the Afghanistan withdrawal.

Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, called Kirby's comments "disgraceful and insulting."

Miller and Merchant write for the Associated Press.

Iran and Saudi Arabia restore ties, calling for stability in the Mideast

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBAI — Longtime Mideast rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia took another significant step toward reconciliation Thursday, formally restoring diplomatic ties after a seven-year rift, affirming the need for regional stability and agreeing to pursue economic cooperation.

The agreement was reached in Beijing during a meeting between the Iranian and Saudi foreign ministers, a month after China brokered an initial reconciliation agreement between the regional powerhouses.

The latest understanding not only lowers the chance of armed conflict between the Mideast rivals, but also could bolster efforts by diplomats to end a long war in Yemen, a conflict in which both Iran and Saudi Arabia are deeply entrenched on opposing sides.

Thursday's announcement also represents another diplomatic victory for the Chinese as gulf Arab states perceive the United States to be slowly withdrawing from the wider region.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian laid out details of Thursday's agreement in a tweet after his talks with Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan.

The minister wrote that Thursday marked the beginning of "official diplomatic relations ... economic and commercial cooperation, the reopening of embassies and consulates general, and the emphasis on stability, stable security and development of the region." Amirabdollahian said that the issues were "agreed upon and on the common agenda."

Iranian Foreign Ministry

FOREIGN Ministers Hossein Amirabdollahian of Iran, from left, Qin Gang of China and Prince Faisal bin Farhan of Saudi Arabia meet Thursday in Beijing.

Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency said that as part of Thursday's agreement, a Saudi representative office would be established in Mashhad, Iran, and an Iranian one in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

The report said both sides agreed to study the prospects of resuming flights and official and private visits between the two nations, in addition to facilitating the visa process for their citizens.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said foreign ministers from both nations signed a joint statement and expressed their determination to improve ties in line with their talks in Beijing last month.

The state-run Saudi Press Agency carried a brief news item on the meeting, saying that "discussions were held on joint relations and ways to enhance cooperation in many fields," with both sides aiming to "enhance the security, stability, and prosperity of the two countries and peoples."

Thursday's talks marked the first formal meeting of senior diplomats from the two nations since 2016, when the kingdom broke ties with Iran after protesters invaded Saudi diplomatic posts there. Saudi Arabia had executed a prominent Shiite cleric and 46 other people days earlier, triggering the demonstrations.

The warming of ties shows that "regional countries have the will and ability to take the lead" in maintaining peace, Mao said at the briefing.

She said China was ready to support both sides in fostering good relations, urging the international community to help the Middle Eastern countries resolve their differences.

"The colonial hegemonic tactics of stirring up contradictions, creating estrangement and division should be rejected by the people all over the world," she said.

While the reopening of embassies would mark a major step forward, the extent of the rapprochement could depend on peace efforts in Yemen, where Saudi Arabia has been at war with the Iran-backed Houthi rebels since 2015, after the rebels' capture of the capital and much of northern Yemen.

Saudi Arabia is also deeply suspicious of Iran's nuclear program, which has advanced significantly since the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from a 2015 agreement with world powers to curb Iran's atomic activities in exchange for sanctions relief.

"I know from my conversations with the Saudis, they are going to be watching the Yemen space," Tim Lenderking, the Biden administration's envoy for Yemen, told a think-tank audience in Washington this week.

"If the Iranians want to show that they're really turning a corner on the conflict, then there won't be smuggling of weapons to the Houthis anymore in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions." He pointed to alleged Iranian involvement in smuggling narcotics as well.

Lenderking cited Iran's support for an ongoing truce there as a recent positive sign, and called on Tehran to support political efforts for a lasting peace agreement.

Japan army copter with 10 aboard missing

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TOKYO — A missing Japanese army helicopter carrying 10 crew members is believed to have crashed into the sea off a southern island after objects appearing to be aircraft parts were spotted in the area, an official said Thursday.

The UH-60JA Black Hawk helicopter disappeared from radar Thursday afternoon while on a reconnaissance mission north of Miyako island, said Yasunori Morishita, the head of the Ground Self-Defense Force, Japan's army.

Debris believed to be aircraft parts was spotted in the area, southwest of Tokyo, Morishita said at a news conference.

The government is aggressively building up its defense capability in southwestern Japan in response to China's increasingly assertive military activity in the region, including Taiwan.

Kyodo News said coast guard ships found traces of oil and debris that may be related to the missing helicopter, but officials declined to confirm the report.

Morishita said the helicopter was stationed at a key regional army base in Kumamoto prefecture on the southern main island of Kyushu, and one of its 10 crew members was the division commander, Yuichi Sakamoto.

Morishita said the helicopter disappeared from radar earlier than previously thought.

NHK public television earlier said the helicopter disappeared from radar about an hour after it departed from a base on Miyako island and about half an hour before its scheduled return.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said the Defense Ministry was investigating.

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THE NATION

Tennessee House expels two Democrats

The GOP-dominated chamber banishes pair after they and another member took part in a gun control protest.

By Kimberlee Kruesi and Jonathan Mattise

Seth Herald Getty Images

REP. JUSTIN JONES raises his fist during a vote on his expulsion from the Tennessee House on Thursday. Jones and fellow Democratic Rep. Justin Pearson were expelled for their roles in a protest at the state Capitol.

NASHVILLE — In an extraordinary act of political retaliation, Tennessee Republicans on Thursday expelled two Democratic lawmakers from the state Legislature for their roles in a protest that called for more gun control in the aftermath of a deadly school shooting in Nashville.

The banishment of Reps. Justin Jones and Justin Pearson was a move the chamber has used only a handful of times since the Civil War. Most state legislatures possess the power to expel members, but it is generally reserved as a punishment for lawmakers accused of serious misconduct, not used as a weapon against political opponents.

The GOP supermajority in the House declined by a single vote to expel a third Democrat, Rep. Gloria Johnson.

Johnson joined with Jones and Pearson last week as hundreds of protesters packed the Capitol to call for passage of gun control measures. While demonstrators filled galleries, the three Democrats approached the front of the House chamber with a bullhorn and participated in a chant.

The protest unfolded days after the shooting at the Covenant School, a private Christian school where six people were killed, including three children.

"We are losing our democracy. This is not normal. This is not OK," Pearson told reporters as he waited to learn whether he would be banished. The three "broke a House rule because we're fighting for kids who are dying from gun violence and people in our communities who want to see an end to the proliferation of weaponry in our communities."

Johnson, a retired teacher, said her concern about school shootings is personal, recalling a day in 2008 when students came running toward her out of a cafeteria because a student had just been fatally shot there.

"The trauma on those faces, you will never, ever forget. I don't want to forget it," she said.

Thousands flocked to the Tennessee Capitol on Thursday to support the three Democratic lawmakers, cheering and chanting outside the House chamber so loudly that they drowned out proceedings.

The three Democrats held hands as they walked onto the House floor, and Pearson raised his fist to the crowd during the Pledge of Allegiance.

Offered a chance to defend himself before the vote, Jones said the GOP responded to the shooting with a different kind of attack.

"We called for you all to ban assault weapons, and you respond with an assault on democracy," he said.

If expelled, Jones vowed that he would continue pressing for action on guns.

"I'll be out there with the people every week, demanding that you act," he said.

Republican Rep. Gino Bulso said the three Democratic representatives "effectively conducted a mutiny."

"The gentleman shows no remorse," Bulso said, referring to Jones. "He does not even recognize that what he did was wrong. So not to expel him would simply invite him and his colleagues to engage in mutiny on the House floor."

The two expelled lawmakers may not be gone for long. County commissions in their districts get to pick replacements to serve until a special election can be scheduled.

The expelled lawmakers would be eligible for appointment back to their seats. They would also be eligible to run in the special election. And under the Tennessee Constitution, lawmakers cannot be expelled for the same offense twice.

Republican Rep. Sabi Kumar advised Jones, who is Black, to be more collegial and less focused on race.

"You have a lot to offer, but offer it in a vein where people are accepting of your ideas," Kumar said.

Jones said he did not intend to assimilate in order to be accepted. "I'm not here to make friends. I'm here to make a change for my community," he replied.

Outrage over the expulsions underscored not only the ability of the Republican supermajority to silence opponents, but also its increasing willingness to do so.

In Washington, President Biden blasted the GOP's priorities.

"Three kids and three officials gunned down in yet another mass shooting. And what are GOP officials focused on? Punishing lawmakers who joined thousands of peaceful protesters calling for action. It's shocking, undemocratic, and without precedent," Biden tweeted.

Many of the protesters traveled from Memphis and Knoxville, areas that Pearson and Johnson represent, and stood in a line that wrapped around the Capitol to get inside.

Protesters outside the chamber held up signs that said, "School zones shouldn't be war zones," "Muskets didn't fire 950 rounds per minute" with a photo of George Washington, and "You can silence a gun ... but not the voice of the people."

Before the expulsion vote, House members debated more than 20 bills, including a school safety proposal requiring public and private schools to submit their building safety plans to the state.

The bill did not address gun control, sparking criticism from some Democratic members that lawmakers were addressing only a symptom and not the cause of school shootings.

Past expulsion votes have taken place under distinctly different circumstances.

In 2019, lawmakers faced pressure to expel then-Rep. David Byrd, a Republican, after he faced accusations of sexual misconduct from when he was a high school basketball coach three decades earlier. Republicans declined to take any action, pointing out that he was reelected as the allegations surfaced. Byrd retired last year.

Last year, the state Senate expelled Democrat Katrina Robinson after she was convicted of using about $3,400 in federal grant money on wedding expenses instead of on nursing school.

Before that case, state lawmakers last ousted a House member in 2016 when the chamber voted 70 to 2 to remove Republican Rep. Jeremy Durham after an attorney general's investigation detailed allegations of improper sexual contact with at least 22 women during his four years in office.

Kruesi and Mattise write for the Associated Press.

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Officials weigh another COVID-19 booster

[**Shots,** from A1]
ber.

Even though uptake of the updated booster shot in Canada has also been relatively low, officials there said it would be beneficial to offer additional doses.

"We have historically seen patterns of waning protection against severe disease by six months after the last dose, particularly in older adults without prior infection," Dr. Shelley Deeks, chair of Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization, said in a statement.

Emerging data demonstrate that those who get the bivalent booster shot are better protected against hospitalization and death, with the benefit particularly pronounced among older individuals.

Among people ages 65 to 79 in L.A. County, for instance, those who got the updated booster had one-tenth the risk of being hospitalized compared with those who are unvaccinated, and roughly half the risk of being hospitalized compared with those who are vaccinated but haven't received the bivalent booster.

Even among younger adults, in their 30s and 40s, the benefits were noticeable. Those who got the updated booster had one-sixth the chance of being hospitalized than unvaccinated people, and roughly half the chance of being hospitalized compared with vaccinated people who hadn't gotten the updated booster.

The same goes with deaths. Those ages 65 to 79 who got the updated booster were about one-tenth as likely to die from COVID-19 compared with unvaccinated people. They were roughly half as likely to die compared with vaccinated people who hadn't received the updated booster.

Even with the termination of many COVID-19 emergency declarations, including in California, officials are stressing vigilance. And vaccinating those most at risk remains a key focus moving forward — particularly as the disease continues to kill thousands of people a week worldwide.

"These [deaths] are largely among individuals who are of older age, they may not have been vaccinated or received the full number of doses that are required for them at their age," said Maria Van Kerkhove, the World Health Organization's technical lead on COVID-19. "So the threat remains."

If authorized by U.S. health officials, additional doses of bivalent vaccine — designed to protect against Omicron subvariants that once dominated the coronavirus landscape — will, as in Britain and Canada, probably be made available for older people or others at higher risk of severe COVID-19 complications.

Dr. Peter Hotez, a pediatrics, molecular virology and microbiology professor at Baylor College of Medicine, has been a prominent supporter of making a second updated booster shot available, given what's known about COVID-19 vaccines' waning protection over time.

"Uptake of the second [updated booster] may only be around 10%," Hotez tweeted. "But for those who want it — especially the immunocompromised — they should have that option."

Health officials have for months touted the benefits of the bivalent boosters, saying they provide added protection against infection, and especially against severe illness.

Still, there appears to be booster fatigue, even in highly vaccinated areas. A Times data analysis showed only two of California's 58 counties had seen even 40% of their eligible residents get an updated booster as of March 31.

By comparison, about 73% of Californians completed their primary vaccination series, and 61% of vaccinated residents have gotten at least one booster shot, according to data from the state Department of Public Health.

Some residents, especially those boosted recently, may have been unclear that the latest shot was formulated differently, or believed they didn't need it.

MEL MELCON Los Angeles Times

NURSE ANGELA TAPIA prepares a dose of the Moderna COVID-19 booster vaccine at the Los Angeles home of Louis Salazar Jr., 64, left, and his father Louis Salazar Sr., 90, in October. They both received a shot, as did mother Maria Salazar, 88.

> 'Lots of people at higher risk are asking whether or not they need another dose. And we're waiting for guidance on that.'
>
> — BARBARA FERRER, Los Angeles County public health director

Hotez said he's struck by how many people don't know an updated booster came out in September.

"We still have a lot of vaccine education that needs to be done," he wrote.

Others could simply be sick of rolling up their sleeves after already receiving multiple shots over the last two years.

COVID-19 conditions may also have played a role. Though California did see a coronavirus surge in late autumn, it was short-lived and came nowhere near the devastation seen earlier in the pandemic.

The reduced severity of COVID-19 this last winter is likely due to a combination of factors, including the fact that older vaccine shots and earlier infections still provide a considerable degree of immunity; a plentiful supply of anti-COVID-19 therapeutic drugs such as Paxlovid; and the relative stability of the dominant coronavirus strain — which has remained some subvariant of Omicron for more than a year.

As has been the case throughout the vaccine rollout, booster administration differs across California. The Times' data analysis shows uptake has been higher in the San Francisco Bay Area and lower in the Inland Empire and San Joaquin Valley.

Coastal Southern California counties are roughly in line with the statewide rate.

Even in the Bay Area, which has consistently boasted robust levels of vaccine uptake, only about 35% of eligible residents have gotten the latest shot.

About 33% of eligible residents in Santa Clara County received the updated booster, as did 36% of those in Alameda County and just under 40% in San Mateo County.

The state's booster leaders were Marin and San Francisco counties, both at about 42%.

Southern California's coastal counties — including Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange and Ventura — all have about the same rate of uptake: 24%. Santa Barbara County's is slightly higher, at 25%.

The Greater Sacramento area had a booster uptake rate of 27%, roughly in line with the overall statewide figure.

The San Joaquin Valley, however, lags well behind. The updated booster rate there was around 16%, the worst of the five regions defined by the state Department of Public Health.

The same was true in the Inland Empire. Riverside and San Bernardino counties have seen far lower updated booster coverage than their coastal neighbors, at 19% and 17%, respectively.

Although booster rates are not what officials had hoped for, authorities say it's significant that large majorities of a number of highly populated areas did complete the primary vaccination series.

There was a time when getting so many people vaccinated seemed a daunting prospect. L.A. County, for instance, initially set a target of administering at least one shot to 80% of all residents age 16 or older.

That goal long seemed elusive, but the latest county data show that 85% of all county residents 5 or older have received at least one shot, and 77% have completed their primary vaccination series.

And within this group, 46% have received at least one additional dose, whether it be the older or the updated bivalent booster.

For the public, there's an expectation that COVID-19 vaccines may mirror flu shots in the U.S.: one dose, formulated and administered annually.

That approach could bear some fruit. A recent survey from the Kaiser Family Foundation found 53% of adults said they were somewhat or very likely get a COVID-19 vaccine if it was offered annually.

That would be similar to the typical uptake of the flu vaccine. About 48% of U.S. adults have received the flu shot this season, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"We can, as we all know, get both vaccines on the same day, one in each arm," Ferrer said.

"And then we'll have some protections going into what is usually the season with the highest number of respiratory viruses."

Justice still gets gifts — he just doesn't disclose them

A new report comes 19 years after a Times article linking Thomas to a rich GOP donor.

BY DAVID G. SAVAGE

WASHINGTON — It was 2004 when the Los Angeles Times disclosed that Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas had accepted expensive gifts and private plane trips paid for by Harlan Crow, a wealthy Texas real estate investor and a prominent Republican donor.

The gifts included a Bible that once belonged to abolitionist Frederick Douglass — a gift Thomas valued at $19,000 — and a bust of Abraham Lincoln valued at $15,000.

"I just knew he was a fan of Frederick Douglass, and I saw that item come available at an auction and I bought it for him," Crow explained at the time.

He also flew Thomas on his personal plane to Northern California to be his guest at the Bohemian Grove, which held all-male retreats for government and business leaders.

Thomas refused to comment on the article, but it had an effect: Thomas appears to have continued accepting free trips from his wealthy friend. But he stopped disclosing them.

On Thursday, ProPublica reported that Thomas and his wife, Ginni, enjoyed lavish trips across the globe in recent years at Crow's expense, including "nine days of island-hopping" off Indonesia in 2019 aboard a 162-foot "superyacht staffed by a coterie of attendants and a private chef."

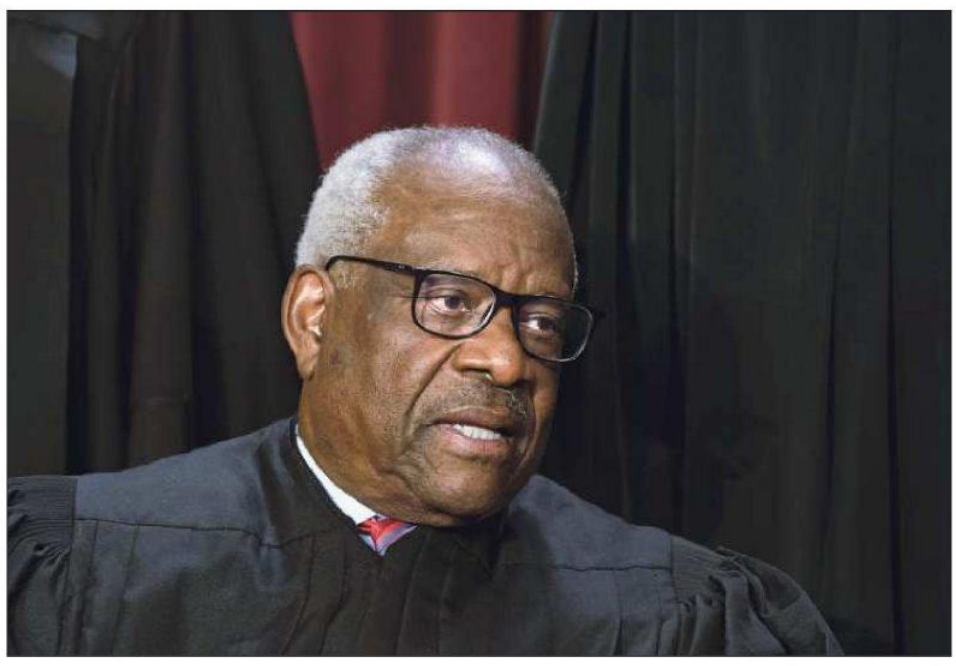
That's a stark contrast from the way Thomas often speaks in public about his summer travels, describing driving a blue motor home and staying in campgrounds.

But Pro-Publica reported that his summer trips regularly include stays in private resorts paid for by Crow, including at Crow's ranch in East Texas and his resort in the Adirondacks in upstate New York.

"The extent and frequency of Crow's apparent gifts to Thomas have no known precedent in the modern history of the U.S. Supreme Court," ProPublica wrote, adding "these trips appeared nowhere on Thomas' financial disclosures."

It remains unclear whether Thomas has violated any law or regulation by accepting such gifts and not disclosing them.

Since 1978, the Ethics in Government Act has required judges and justices to report travel costs and other expenses that are provided to them by groups, universities and other such entities. However, it includes an exception for the "personal hospitality of any individual," so long as the travel does not involve official business.



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE Associated Press

JUSTICE Clarence Thomas is still receiving gifts of lavish travel from a wealthy Texas real estate investor, 19 years after The Times first reported on their ties.

"Justice Thomas and Ginni never asked for any of this hospitality," Crow said in a statement to ProPublica. He added that we "never asked about a pending or lower court case, and Justice Thomas has never discussed one."

Ethics advocates have been frustrated that the court and Congress have failed to enforce stricter rules for the nation's top judges. They say Thomas and his wife illustrate the need for greater scrutiny.

Ginni Thomas is a longtime conservative activist in Washington who sought to overturn President Trump's election loss in 2020, including communicating with Trump White House aides and state election officials.

"We have been here before," said Gabe Roth, executive director of Fix the Court, an advocate for court reform. "Clarence Thomas has been taking these trips for decades and not disclosing them."

In his recent annual disclosure statements, Thomas has checked a box indicating he had no gifts to report.

Responding to the ProPublica story, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.) tweeted "the highest court in the land shouldn't have the lowest ethical standard. Justice Thomas' lavish undisclosed trips with a GOP mega-donor undermine the trust that our country places in the Supreme Court. Time for an enforceable code of conduct for justices."

Last month, the federal court's policymaking group announced somewhat tighter standards to require the reporting of travel on private jets and lodging at private resorts that operate commercially.

Although those rules may prompt further disclosures next year, they would not regulate or prohibit such travel.

Roth said ProPublica's report makes clear that "the personal hospitality rules the judiciary adopted last month do not go far enough: The Supreme Court and lower courts need the same, if not stricter, gift and travel rules than what members of Congress have. That means a judicial ethics office to preapprove sponsored trips, no matter who — even a 'friend' — is footing the bill."

Biden proposal bars full bans on trans athletes

The measure affecting schools and colleges would allow for teams to create some limits.

By Collin Binkley

WASHINGTON — Schools and colleges across the U.S. would be prohibited from enacting outright bans on transgender athletes under a Biden administration proposal released Thursday, but teams could create some limits in certain cases — for example, to ensure fairness.

The proposed rule sends a political counterpunch toward a wave of Republican-led states that have sought to ban trans athletes from competing in school sports that align with their gender identities. If finalized, the proposal would become enshrined as a provision of Title IX, the landmark gender equity legislation enacted in 1972.

It must undergo a lengthy approval process, however, and it's almost certain to face challenges. Although opponents sharply criticized the proposal, some advocates for transgender athletes were concerned that it did not go far enough.

The proposal comes on the same day that the Supreme Court said a 12-year-old transgender girl in West Virginia can continue competing on her middle school track and cross-country teams while legal battles over the state's transgender law continue. The law bans transgender athletes from female teams.

All told, at least 16 states now have bans in effect covering at least high school interscholastic sports. Some also extend to intramural, club or college sports. Enforcement of bans in at least three states has been put on hold by courts, and one more has adopted a ban that doesn't take effect until July.

Under the Education Department's proposed rule, no school or college that receives federal funding would be allowed to impose a "one-size-fits-all" policy that categorically bans trans students from playing on sports teams consistent with their gender identity. Such policies would be considered a violation of Title IX.

Still, it leaves room for schools to develop team eligibility rules that could result in restrictions on trans athletes' participation. That would be allowed only if it serves "important educational objectives," such as fairness in competition and reduction of injury risks.

Any limits would have to consider the sport, the level of competition and the age of students. Elementary school students would generally be allowed to participate on any teams consistent with their gender identity, for example. More competitive teams at high schools and colleges could add limits, but those would be discouraged for teams that don't have tryouts or cuts.

"Every student should be able to have the full experience of attending school in America, including participating in athletics, free from discrimination," Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said in a statement.

The Biden administration used "fairness of competition" as criteria, which has been part of the debate both in the U.S. and globally. But officials offered no specifics on how this could be done.

Of the tens of millions of high school students in the U.S., about 300,000 youths between the ages of 13 and 17 identify as transgender, according to a 2022 study from the Williams Institute, a think tank at UCLA focused on LGBTQ issues. The number of athletes within that group is much smaller; a 2017 survey by the Human Rights Campaign suggested fewer than 15% of all transgender youths play sports.

Asked about the proposal, Bobbie Hirsch, a transgender man and sophomore on the men's fencing team at Wayne State University, said that "anything helps" but that he feared the rule's language would make it easier for schools to tell transgender athletes they can't play on a team. "That's the direction things have been going," he said in a phone interview.

Hirsch competed on the women's team in the 2021-22 season, and began transitioning socially in high school and medically in the summer of 2022.

Asked about the state bans now in place, a senior Education Department official briefing reporters on condition of anonymity said Title IX is the law of the land and the department would work to ensure it's being followed in all the states.

Critics argue transgender athletes have an advantage over cisgender women in competition. Last year, Lia Thomas became the first transgender woman to win an NCAA swimming title. College sports' governing body, however, adopted a sport-by-sport approach to transgender athletes in January 2022, which was to bring the organization in line with the U.S. and International Olympic committees, though recently the NCAA's board decided it won't be fully implemented until 2023-24.

The NCAA released a statement Thursday saying: "The NCAA's current transgender student-athlete participation policy aligns with the Olympic movement and balances fairness, inclusion and safety for all student-athletes. That policy remains in place while the lengthy Title IX regulatory process plays out."

At the same time, international sports-governing bodies are instituting policies that ban all trans athletes from competing in track and field and in effect ban trans women from swimming events.

Sasha Buchert, Lambda Legal senior attorney and director of the group's Nonbinary and Transgender Rights Project, said the rule provided "critical recognition of the importance of participating in sports for transgender youth." But she expressed concern about whether it would eliminate discrimination against transgender students.

But an attorney for cisgender runners decried the proposal as "a slap in the face to female athletes who deserve equal opportunity to compete in their sports."

"The Biden administration's rewriting Title IX degrades women and tells them that their athletic goals and placements do not matter," said Christiana Kiefer, senior counsel at Alliance Defending Freedom. She represented Connecticut runners who sued over the participation of two transgender girls in track and field events.

The proposal doesn't offer examples of acceptable limits that can be placed on school sports, but it clarifies that restrictions can't be directed at trans students only. Schools will be left to navigate that tricky legal terrain, with the knowledge that any violation could bring a federal civil rights investigation or lawsuits.

Binkley writes for the Associated Press.

Raymond Thompson Jr.

TRANS RUNNER Becky Pepper-Jackson can compete on the girls' cross-country and track teams at her middle school in Bridgeport, W. Va., the Supreme Court said, blocking a state ban on transgender athletes.

Justices refuse West Virginia's bid to bar girl from track team

[**Transgender,** from A1]

If enforced, the state law would have prohibited Becky Pepper-Jackson, a 12-year-old transgender girl, from running on the girls' cross-country and track teams at her middle school in Bridgeport, W. Va.

She and her mother said she knew she was a girl, not a boy, before she began school. She "has lived as a girl in all aspects of her life for years and receives puberty-delaying treatment and estrogen hormone therapy, so has not experienced (and will not experience) endogenous puberty," they told the court.

She has been an enthusiastic member of the girls' cross-country team, even though she is not a fast runner and usually finished well back in the pack. Her school had welcomed her participation until the state adopted the law.

In 2021, she sued and won before a federal judge who noted "not one child has been or is likely to be harmed by B.P.J.'s continued participation on her middle school's cross-country and track teams." He issued a preliminary injunction to block enforcement of the law.

But in January, the judge reversed course and upheld the law. He said it did not violate the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection of the laws nor Title IX, the education law that forbids discrimination based on sex.

The ACLU appealed, and the 4th Circuit Court, in a 2-1 order, put the judge's decision on hold. The two judges in the majority did not explain their reasons.

On March 9, West Virginia Atty. Gen. Patrick Morrisey announced he was "taking the fight for fairness in women's sports all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court." He sought an emergency order from the high court allowing the law to take effect.

In adopting the Save Women's Sports Act, West Virginia lawmakers voiced concern that transgender girls could have an unfair advantage if they could compete on the girls' teams in schools or colleges. They pointed to incidents in other states where high school girls who were sprinters, swimmers or volleyball players allegedly "found themselves falling behind or pushed aside by biologically male athletes," the state said.

Morrisey told the court the law "just seeks to accommodate physiological differences rooted in biological sex in a context where those differences matter."

On Thursday, Morrisey said he was disappointed. "This is a procedural setback, but we remain confident that when this case is ultimately determined on the merits, we will prevail," he said in a statement.

The American Civil Liberties Union and Lambda Legal had denounced the state's emergency appeal as a "petty and baseless move" and welcomed the decision.

"We are grateful that the Supreme Court today acknowledged that there was no emergency and that Becky should be allowed to continue to participate with her teammates on her middle school track team, which she has been doing without incident for three going on four seasons," they said.

California Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta had joined with attorneys for 17 other Democratic-led states in urging the court to block the West Virginia law as unconstitutional.

"Because the sole function of West Virginia's law is to exclude and stigmatize transgender girls like B.P.J., it violates equal protection under any level of scrutiny," they said in a brief.

They said California and other states have prohibited discrimination against transgender athletes for a decade.

"The Los Angeles Unified School District, one of the largest school districts in the country, has implemented a transgender-inclusive sports policy for many years without problems," they told the court. "The district's policy has led to a positive 'transformation' in the district's schools: an experience that stands in stark contrast to expressed concerns that students will abuse the policy."

The case was West Virginia vs. B.P.J.

The Supreme Court has not formally ruled in a case involving transgender students. But three years ago, the justices ruled transgender employees are protected from job discrimination under the federal civil rights laws.

The court's opinion, written by Justice Neil M. Gorsuch, said the law prohibited discrimination based on sex, and discrimination against a transgender employee fit that definition.

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IMPORTANT DATES & TRADES

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04-19-2023: Outreach Meeting
04-21-2023: Matchmaking Event
05-05-2023: Bids Due
06-21-2023: Target Award

Reinforcing Steel · Unit Masonry
Cast-In-Place Concrete
Metal Stairs · Dampproofing & Waterproofing · Fluid-Applied Waterproofing · Storefront & Curtainwall · Fire Sprinkler
Site Piped Utilities · Site Electrical Utilities Piles & Caissons

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Los Angeles Times
BOOK PRIZES

April 21 at 7 p.m.

It's the literary event you've been waiting for — Book Prizes is returning for its 43rd year, honoring the best books published in 2022. Join us at Bovard Auditorium on the USC campus, where we'll celebrate new voices and expand the reach of today's most impactful writers.

Scan the QR code or visit **latimes.com/bookprizes** for information and ceremony tickets.

PRIZE PRESENTERS

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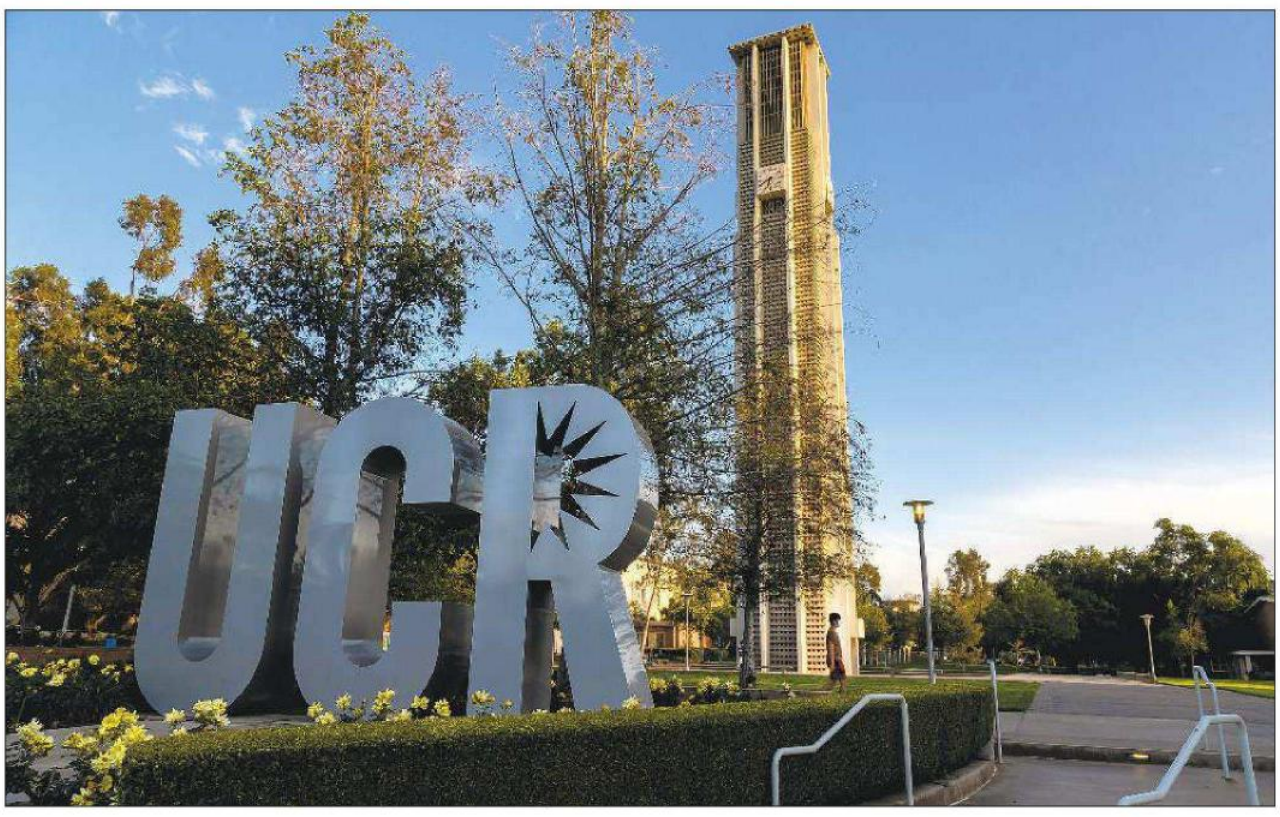
Los Angeles Times FESTIVAL OF BOOKS
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

BUSINESS

UC Riverside closes center tied to firm

University's deal with Beacon Economics to do research and make forecasts was sharply criticized by faculty.

By Suhauna Hussain



Gina Ferazzi Los Angeles Times

IN A LETTER to UC Regents, more than 100 faculty members and graduate students said that the Center for Economic Forecasting and Development lacked funding transparency and proper academic oversight.

UC Riverside has shut down its economics research center after some University of California faculty urged an investigation into an arrangement with private consulting firm Beacon Economics to run the center, using what the faculty members described as corporate funding for reports "attacking proposals to improve the lives of working Californians."

In a letter delivered in February to UC Regents, signed by more than 100 faculty members and graduate students, the group contended that the center lacked funding transparency and proper academic oversight.

The website for the research center was taken down in late February, after The Times revealed financial details of the arrangement with Beacon Economics as well as concern by faculty. UC Riverside spokesperson John Warren said in an emailed statement that Beacon Economics will no longer operate the research center.

Warren said that UC Riverside, however, still plans to pursue a contract with Beacon to host the annual Inland Empire Economic Forecast Conference, which "has been popular and valued by the community."

Beacon Economics founder Christopher Thornberg, who was director of the Center for Economic Forecasting and Development, did not respond to a request for comment.

The faculty letter took issue with Thornberg's listed title of adjunct professor on the center's website. Thornberg did not teach classes or appear in school faculty or other directories.

Thornberg and Victoria Bond, a spokesperson for Beacon Economics, had previously defended the center's research, dismissing criticism as partisan, ideological attacks without scholarly merit. They said Thornberg's title of adjunct professor and his oversight of the center were subject to the same type of academic review and adhered to the same standards that apply to all UC centers.

"This petition is packed full of completely false allegations about my center, about our relationship with the university and about me," Thornberg said. Faculty members were mobilized by the Service Employees International Union, which represents fast-food workers and others, because the union disagrees with the empirical results of his research, he said.

The university had previously told The Times that it intended to renew Beacon Economics' contract, which expired in December 2022. Under the contract, UC Riverside's business school paid Beacon Economics $140,800 annually to produce a set of regional economic white papers and run the conference, branded as an event by the research center.

In addition, Beacon Economics paid UC Riverside 10% royalty fees to publish reports bearing the research center's branding, The Times reported in February after reviewing UC Riverside documents obtained through a public records request by the SEIU. It was the first time that financial details of the arrangement were revealed.

Major industry groups — including the International Franchise Assn. and a coalition of gig companies such as Uber, Lyft, DoorDash and Instacart — were clients in recent years, paying tens of thousands of dollars for reports from the research center. Beacon Economics took in close to $680,000 in 2022 for work it generated bearing UC Riverside branding, according to the documents.

"The School of Business is considering options for continuing the center independent of Beacon," Warren said.

Warren said he expects the university's plans regarding the research center to solidify in the coming months. He declined to provide additional details on the decision.

The decision ends the research center's run with Beacon Economics that began in 2015, when the campus' business school launched the center with the goal of increasing its stature in the Inland Empire.

The research center's website now redirects to a webpage for the Inland Empire Economic Forecast Conference in October 2022.

Email exchanges between Thornberg and UC Riverside Business School Dean Yunzeng Wang in December and January obtained through a March public records request show Beacon Economics was seeking additional annual compensation of $120,000 in its new contract.

Negotiations in January appeared to land on a temporary financial arrangement under which the firm would absorb UC Riverside's cut of its quarterly revenue. Any expenditures that exceeded the center's income would be deducted from its future revenue, ensuring that UC Riverside would not operate the center at a loss.

Discussions on the length of the contract continued, with Beacon Economics seeking a three- to six-month term, while UC Riverside sought a long-term contract.

UC Riverside typically profited from its arrangement with Beacon Economics, netting an average of $29,000 a year, Thornberg said in one of the emails.

The university's association with Beacon Economics had "defaced" its academic credibility and the decision to sever the relationship was "long overdue," said Dylan Rodriguez, a media studies professor at UC Riverside and former chair of UC Riverside's Faculty Senate who helped to circulate the faculty letter.

"Beacon's sloppy propaganda, passing as scholarly reports, has widely circulated under the badge of the University of California," Rodriguez said in an email. "UCR should not be applauded for ending the relationship with Beacon, it should be asked whether and how it will attempt to address and repair the damage that [the] relationship has already caused to [the] university's research reputation as well as the working people of California."

Retired regional economist John Husing said in an interview that UC Riverside has been largely absent from discussions on the Inland Empire's economy.

In a recent email reviewed by The Times that Husing wrote to UC Riverside leadership criticizing the research center arrangement, he described Beacon Economics as a Los Angeles firm well known among Inland Empire economists for having an "aggressive social, political and financial agenda" that was using UC Riverside's name to promote its high-priced consulting work.

"The so-called 'Center' is supposed to show the university performing research on the Inland Empire economy, a worthy objective," he wrote. "In fact, they have never done any."

Biden aims to give EVs big push

President's pollution rules are expected to target tailpipe emissions of cars from model years '27 to '32.

By Jennifer A. Dlouhy

Michael Probst Associated Press

THE BIDEN administration's plan is part of its multipronged strategy to clamp down on planet-warming pollution from transportation and electricity.

The Biden administration is on track to propose the toughest-ever U.S. curbs on car pollution, while stopping short of an electric vehicle mandate or ban on gas-powered models.

The proposed standards on cars and light trucks, set to be announced Wednesday in Detroit, are expected to govern tailpipe emissions of carbon dioxide, smog-forming nitrogen oxide and other pollution from vehicles manufactured for model years 2027 through 2032. The plan was described by people briefed on elements of the proposal who asked not to be named because it isn't yet public.

Major U.S. automakers have pleaded for requirements extending just a few years, while EV makers such as Tesla say the administration should take advantage of new federal-government investments in charging and battery production to push for even stricter limits on car emissions.

The plan is part of a multipronged Biden administration strategy to clamp down on planet-warming pollution from transportation and electricity, taking advantage of hundreds of billions of dollars of clean energy incentives under the Inflation Reduction Act. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which is writing the new requirements, also is set to propose new rules for greenhouse gas releases from heavy-duty trucks Wednesday and on power plants as soon as later this month.

Limits on car pollution are key to helping the U.S. meet its Paris climate agreement commitment to slash greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% from 2005 levels by the end of the decade and fulfilling President Biden's ambition for at least half of all new vehicle sales to be electric models by 2030. Although U.S. automakers such as General Motors and Ford have outlined bullish plans for EV sales, environmental advocates say aggressive tailpipe standards are necessary.

"There has to be continuous pressure for improvement" to prevent industry backsliding, said Dan Becker, director of the Center for Biological Diversity's Safe Climate Transport Campaign.

The EPA declined to comment on the substance of the coming rules because they are under interagency review. In a statement, the agency said it's developing new standards to build on Biden's clean-energy progress and "support the transition to a zero-emissions transportation future, protecting people and the planet."

The EPA's auto standards are performance-based — taking the form of maximum allowed emissions per mile — and do not prescribe specific technology for meeting the targets. However, EVs are seen as a key way to fulfill the requirements.

Environmentalists, public health and EV advocates have lobbied the administration to ensure requirements for model year 2030 vehicles are 75% tougher than those governing 2021 models.

Strong standards are "incredibly important" to sending market signals to accelerate EV emissions and secure necessary emission reductions later on, said Britt Carmon, a senior advocate with the Natural Resources Defense Council.

The EPA is poised to reject some environmentalists' requests to set standards through 2035, however. Automakers pushed for a shorter timetable, cautioning White House officials in a Feb. 14 meeting that the trajectory for EVs and emission reductions depends on factors outside their control, including investments in charging infrastructure and crucial mineral production.

The shift will require a "massive, 100-year change to the U.S. industrial base," and the rule should be based on "a clear-eyed assessment of market readiness," the Alliance for Automotive Innovation said Thursday.

The EPA proposal is set to also tighten limits on smog-forming vehicle pollution, potentially forcing automakers to adopt exhaust controls already used on cars sold in Europe, China and other markets.

It's crucial to stifle pollution from conventional gas-powered cars even as EVs take off, said Paul Billings, national senior vice president of public policy for the American Lung Assn. "We are going to have combustion vehicles being sold into the next decade, and we want to make sure that they are as clean as possible."

Dlouhy writes for Bloomberg.

IRS vows to do better, no new armed agents

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service released details Thursday on how it plans to use an infusion of $80 billion for improved operations, pledging to invest in new technology, hire more customer service representatives and expand its ability to audit high-wealth taxpayers.

Although some Republicans have suggested without evidence that the money from the Democrats' landmark climate change and healthcare bill would help create a mob of armed auditors to harass middle-class taxpayers, new IRS Commissioner Daniel Werfel said it will not include spending for new agents with guns.

The agency's newly released strategic operating plan details how the IRS will allocate the $80 billion, over eight years, that was approved in that legislation.

Some improvements have been expected, such as bringing more paper-based systems online and answering taxpayers' phone calls promptly. Others are more ambitious: continuing to explore ways to create a government-operated electronic free-file tax return system, for example.

No hiring boost is foreseen for the criminal investigation unit, which represents 3% of the agency's workforce and employed roughly 2,077 special agents as of the 2022 budget year, according to the IRS' annual report. Those are the agents who may be armed.

There are "no plans to increase" that division, Werfel said during a call with reporters.

Since President Biden signed the measure, known as the Inflation Reduction Act, in August, some Republicans have said the IRS would use the new money to hire an army of 87,000 tax agents with weapons.

That claim comes from a plan the Treasury Department proposed in 2021 to bring on that many IRS employees over the next decade if it got the money. At least 50,000 IRS employees are expected to retire over the next five years.

The strategic plan does not include final numbers on long-term hiring.

During the call with reporters, Deputy Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo said the plan "is heavily driven by the fact that we need to make technology investments that will improve productivity, which will mean that over time the number of employees and the mix of employees at the IRS will change."

After Congress passed the legislation last summer, Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen directed the IRS to develop a plan outlining how the agency would overhaul its technology, customer service and hiring processes. Her memo sent instructions to IRS leadership not to increase audit rates on people making less than $400,000 a year annually.

Officials are promising not "to raise audit rates on small businesses and households making under $400,000 per year, relative to historic levels."

Robert Nassau, director of the Low Income Taxpayer Clinic at Syracuse University College of Law, said he has seen some noticeable process differences.

"The phone line is amazingly improved, that part of the IRS is working amazingly better," he said. "But I can see the processing time of written submissions is not back to pre-pandemic sufficiency."

Additional money for the IRS has been politically controversial since 2013, when the agency during the Obama administration was found to have scrutinized political groups that applied for tax-exempt status. A report by the Treasury Department's internal watchdog found that both conservative and liberal groups were chosen for close review.

Latino Caucus urged to broaden priorities

[**Caucus,** from A1]
gration policy amid anti-immigrant sentiment in the 1990s, said the caucus' priorities should shift to establish stability and generational wealth, and promote education and health for the people hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Looking ahead, we really have got to start thinking about other issues," Escutia said. "Immigration reform still remains an elusive goal in the federal government, but there are other problems that we have too."

Mike Madrid, a Latino Republican political consultant, agreed and said immigration and farmworker policies were a strength of the Latino Caucus decades ago, but "now it seems like there's this inability to get beyond those issues."

A Public Policy Institute of California poll released in February found that far more Latino Californians were concerned about jobs and the economy, as well as homelessness, than they were about immigration.

Fernando Guerra, a political science professor at Loyola Marymount University, said it's a mistake to believe that the caucus was ever a political monolith focused on just immigration policy.

"Latinos have always thought that education, health, public safety, the economy and jobs were all more important than immigration," he said. "The idea that immigration was the No. 1 issue that Latinos pursued just isn't true."

ROBERT GOURLEY Los Angeles Times

THE LATINO Legislative Caucus, chaired by Assemblymember Sabrina Cervantes, celebrated its 50th anniversary by introducing 14 bills intended to strengthen Latinos' access to health, housing and education.

The caucus last week celebrated its 50th anniversary by reflecting on political accomplishments and introducing a package of 14 bills intended to strengthen Latinos' access to health, housing and education.

"The issues that they fought for are the same issues we're fighting for today," said current Latino Caucus Chair Sabrina Cervantes. "At the end of the day, we want to make sure that we're fighting on behalf of the nearly 15.6 million Latinos in the state of California, where we're providing that beacon of hope for them in Sacramento."

The proposed legislation includes efforts to expand social services to immigrants without documentation: Assembly Bill 311 by Assemblymember Miguel Santiago (D-Los Angeles) would provide access to food stamps for all eligible people regardless of citizenship status; Senate Bill 227 by Sen. María Elena Durazo (D-Los Angeles) would establish an unemployment fund for workers without documentation; and AB 4 by Assemblymember Joaquin Arambula (D-Fresno) would expand healthcare through Covered California for immigrants without documentation.

Other bills would expand resources for English-language learners and cultural education. AB 393 by Assemblymember Luz Rivas (D–North Hollywood) would require the state to identify dual-language learners in early learning programs.

Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo's AB 1255 would create a statewide task force to help develop an ethnic studies credential for K-12 teachers. This bill supports the 2021 law that requires all California high school students to take an ethnic studies course to graduate.

"We're not asking for history teachers to become ethnic studies teachers, we're asking that the state of California create the pathway to credentialing teachers to teach ethnic studies to make this a reality," Carrillo (D-Los Angeles) said.

AB 470 by Assemblymember Avelino Valencia (D-Anaheim) would expand access to language and cultural education for practicing doctors in California to fulfill their continuing medical education requirements. Ten million Californians speak Spanish, but there are only 60 Spanish-speaking physicians per 100,000 people in the state, he said.

Latino Caucus Vice Chair Sen. Lena Gonzalez filed legislation that would increase the number of paid sick leave days from three to seven for Californians who work 30 days or more per year.

The Long Beach Democrat said the three-day sick leave policy was "groundbreaking" in 2014, but nearly 10 years later and amid the reverberating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, "it is outdated and insufficient to meet the needs of our diverse workforce."

Over the last half-century, the Latino Caucus has produced some of California's most influential political leaders, including former Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina, the first Latina elected to the state Legislature; Alex Padilla, California's first Latino U.S. senator; Antonio Villaraigosa, the first Latino elected as Los Angeles mayor in over 100 years; and U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra, the state's first Latino attorney general.

But the group also weathered a major storm a few years back. Former Latino Caucus executive board member Sen. Ron Calderon was sent to prison in 2016 after pleading guilty to a federal corruption charge of accepting tens of thousands of dollars in bribes from undercover FBI agents and a hospital executive.

The California Latino Legislative Caucus also has faced criticism for excluding Republicans.

There are four Republican Latinos in the Legislature. Kate A. Sanchez (R-Trabuco Canyon), Josh Hoover (R-Folsom) and Juan Alanis (R-Modesto) are in the Assembly. Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh (R-Yucaipa) was elected to the Senate in 2020.

Alanis congratulated the Latino Caucus' anniversary in an email statement, but said, "It is unfortunate that Latino members remain excluded because of party affiliation."

Madrid, the GOP political consultant, said the continuing partisan nature of the caucus hindered its growth over the last 20 years. "It's really a relic of the past," he said. "They shouldn't be afraid of having discussions and ideas; they control the legislative agenda anyway."

Diversity in the Latino Caucus has increased through the years. This is the second time in its 50 years that two women lead. Cervantes is the first openly LGBTQ female chair. Latinos of different cultural backgrounds, including Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Salvadorans, represent people all across the state.

"Our diverse experiences, our perspectives and our voices at every leadership level allow us to understand better and respond to the needs of the people that we represent daily," Cervantes said.

Cervantes said representation in government is essential to future prosperity and that caucus members are mindful about elevating Latinos to higher positions.

"We have to continue utilizing our collective voice because it is powerful," Cervantes said. "We will continue to ensure that we are elevating names so that we can get more representation."

MARKET ROUNDUP

Stocks rise to close shortened week

BY STAN CHOE

Stocks ticked higher on Wall Street on Thursday, offering a quiet end to a shortened trading week dogged by worries about a slowing economy.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 14.64 points, or 0.4%, to 4,105.02. It ended with a 0.1% loss for the week, its first down week in the last four. The U.S. stock market will be closed in observance of Good Friday.

The Dow Jones industrial average edged up by 2.57 points, or less than 0.1%, to 33,485.29, while the Nasdaq composite gained 91.09 points, or 0.8%, to close at 12,087.96.

A report Thursday morning showed that fewer U.S. workers filed for unemployment benefits last week, though the number was still higher than expected. The government changed how it tracks the numbers, which could cause some swings.

Thursday's data followed a string of reports on the economy earlier in the week that were weaker than expected. That included the number of job openings across the country and the strength of the U.S. manufacturing and services industries.

The spotlight will be on the U.S. government's comprehensive jobs report that will be released Friday. Economists expect it to show that employers added 244,000 jobs last month, down from 311,000 in February.

The economy has been slowing under the weight of much higher interest rates, and the big question is how much higher they will go.

Major stock indexes

Index	Close	Daily change	Daily % change	YTD % change
Dow industrials	33,485.29	+2.57	+0.01	+1.02
S&P 500	4,105.02	+14.64	+0.36	+6.92
Nasdaq composite	12,087.96	+91.10	+0.76	+15.49
S&P 400	2,447.09	-4.45	-0.18	+0.69
Russell 2000	1,754.46	+2.33	+0.13	-0.39
EuroStoxx 50	4,308.51	+10.15	+0.24	+13.61
Nikkei (Japan)	27,472.63	-340.63	-1.22	+5.28
Hang Seng (Hong Kong)	20,331.20	+56.61	+0.28	+2.78

Associated Press

The Federal Reserve is trying to pull off the delicate balancing act of raising rates just enough to drive down high inflation, but not so much that it causes a recession. It's difficult because interest rates are a notoriously blunt tool, one that works only by slowing the entire economy and dragging down prices for stocks, bonds and other investments.

"Ultimately no one knows what it will take to bring inflation back down to the 2% target, but the odds are much higher that it will cause a recession — and even a significant recession — than most people are currently willing to believe," said Chris Zaccarelli, chief investment officer of Independent Advisor Alliance.

The stock market has remained relatively resilient in the face of recession worries, even as analysts expect the upcoming earnings reporting season to show the worst drop since the spring of 2020. That was when the COVID-19 pandemic was wrecking the global economy.

Strategists at Goldman Sachs say they're more likely to downgrade their forecasts for corporate profits in 2023 than to raise them, given strains in the banking system that flared last month. The second- and third-largest U.S. bank failures rattled the industry, and the fear is that could lead to a pullback in lending that weakens the rest of the economy.

That has critics saying the stock market looks too expensive and could be setting itself up for disappointment if more discouraging data arrive. Given all the risks, high-quality bonds look to have a better risk-return trade-off than stocks over the next six to nine months, much like the tortoise over the hare, said Jason Draho, UBS Global Wealth Management's head of asset allocation for the Americas.

"Of course, sometimes the hare can temporarily pull ahead," he said.

There has been more fear in the bond market, where Treasury yields have sunk sharply over the last month on worries about a weaker economy and the banking system's struggles.

The 10-year Treasury yield slipped to 3.29% from 3.31% late Wednesday and from more than 4% last month. It helps set rates for mortgages and other important loans.

The two-year yield is down to 3.82% from more than 5% last month. It tends to more closely track expectations for the Fed.

Traders are split on whether the weaker economy and the banking system's woes will push the Fed to hold rates steady at its next meeting in May. It has raised rates in every meeting since March 2022.

Beyond that, many traders are also betting that the Fed will have to cut rates later this year in order to prop up the economy. The Fed, meanwhile, has been adamant in saying that it does not plan any rate cuts this year. Rate cuts can relax conditions for the economy and financial markets, but they could also give inflation more oxygen.

Inflation is still higher than the Fed wants, and it has said it does not want to risk letting up too early.

On Wall Street, Costco fell 2.2% after the warehouse membership retailer said an important measure of its sales fell in March as consumers pulled back spending on big-ticket items.

Levi Strauss fell 16% despite reporting stronger-than-expected profit and revenue for the latest quarter. Analysts said some of the sales may have been the result of discounting, pointing to squeezed profit margins.

In markets abroad, stock indexes were mixed across Europe and Asia.

Choe writes for the Associated Press. AP writers Yuri Kageyama and Matt Ott contributed to this report.

Makena, only drug for preterm birth, is pulled

FDA says shots had risks but no benefits for pregnant women.

BY MELODY PETERSEN

The Food and Drug Administration on Thursday ordered the immediate withdrawal of the only drug meant to prevent preterm birth, saying it's ineffective and risky for pregnant women.

"Effective today, Makena and its generics are no longer approved and cannot lawfully be distributed in interstate commerce," the FDA said in a release.

Doctors and pharmacies still have limited supplies of the drug, which is given as a weekly shot to women at risk of early birth. But the agency urged doctors to proceed carefully in deciding whether to continue to provide the injections given regulators' conclusion that it can't help extend pregnancies.

The Times detailed in a February 2022 investigation how Covis Pharma and the companies that previously owned the rights to Makena profited by taking a cheap, decades-old medicine — a synthetic version of the hormone progesterone — with questionable effectiveness and safety and securing FDA authorization for its use.

Makena has been shown to cause hypertension, depression and other health problems. The FDA says that the drug's possible long-term adverse effects on women and their children are still unknown.

The FDA's order comes more than two years after the agency first asked Covis, a Luxembourg company owned by private equity firm Apollo Global Management, to pull the drug after a study showed it did not stop preterm birth.

Black women are at highest risk of the devastating condition, which is a leading cause of infant deaths.

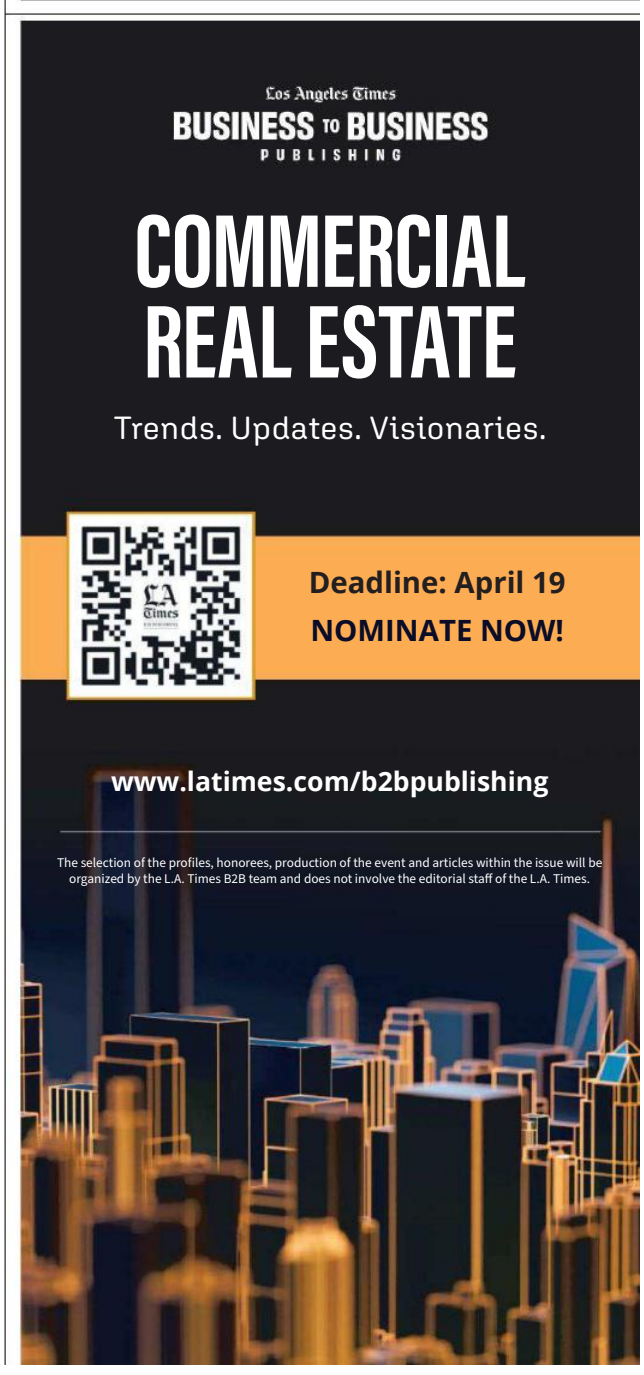
Covis had refused and continued to earn millions of dollars from the drug as the FDA completed a lengthy process allowed by regulations, which included a hearing in October.

A committee of obstetricians and other experts voted 14 to 1 at the hearing that Makena's sales should end.

Last month, Covis said it had agreed to voluntarily withdraw Makena but proposed that women be allowed to finish their treatment of the shots, which can last as long as 21 weeks. On Thursday, the FDA denied that request.

"It is tragic that the scientific research and medical communities have not yet found a treatment shown to be effective in preventing preterm birth and improving neonatal outcomes — particularly in light of the fact that this serious condition has a disparate impact on communities of color, especially Black women," FDA Commissioner Robert Califf said in a statement.

But exposing patients to risks of an ineffective treatment, he said, was not a solution.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OPINION

EDITORIAL

PERSONAL NOTE

Next time, try a little humanity

Shasta County fair officials chose to slaughter a girl's goat to teach her lesson. That's cruel.

The Shasta District Fair last year ended disastrously for a 9-year old girl and her goat. And it didn't end so well for the Shasta County fair officials who sent law enforcement hunting with a search warrant for the animal after the girl decided she didn't want it killed. The goat got slaughtered. But the fair officials got pretty beat up on social media.

Jessica Long's daughter — identified in a pending lawsuit only as E.L. — raised the big-eyed, floppy-eared Cedar as part of a 4-H youth project. She entered him in the Shasta District Fair junior livestock auction, which happens to be something called a terminal auction. The animals that are bought are killed and their meat is turned over to the winning bidders. Just before the auction, the young girl told her mother that she couldn't go through with sending Cedar to slaughter and wanted out. Fair officials refused, according to the lawsuit. After the auction, with her daughter sobbing in Cedar's pen, Long took Cedar and, as she later wrote to fair officials, decided to suffer the consequences later. Mother, daughter and goat left the fair and went to a farm more than 200 miles away in Sonoma County.

Long offered to let the fair keep the entire $902 that was bid for the goat and pay any other costs. But fair officials told her to bring the goat back or law enforcement would be involved. Sure enough, on July 8, two sheriff's deputies drove nearly 500 miles to find and take the goat back, according to the lawsuit.

The fair's chief executive, Melanie Silva, had written to Long in an email that letting the girl take her goat back would only teach youngsters that they don't have to abide by rules. "Also," said the email, "in this era of social media this has been a negative experience for the fairgrounds as this has been all over Facebook and Instagram."

And the fair executives thought sending a posse of sheriff's deputies to confiscate the goat for slaughter, breaking a little girl's heart, would *improve* their social media image?

Long and her daughter filed a lawsuit in federal court against fair officials and the Shasta County Sheriff's Department, contending that their 4th and 14th amendment rights were violated and arguing that the girl was the owner of the goat through the duration of the fair. And besides, the girl (now 10) had a right as a minor under California law to back out of her agreement to sell the goat for slaughter, according to the suit.

Whatever the legal rights are here, if the fair officials had just shown a little humanity toward a young girl desperate to keep her goat, they could have spared themselves a rash of bad publicity, a still growing online petition denouncing the fair's actions and a lawsuit.

And the young girl's plight here is not as rare as you think. Ryan Gordon, the lawyer representing Long, said that every year, his firm, Advancing Law for Animals, is contacted by youngsters participating in fairs who are looking to save their animals from slaughter-only auctions. Several years ago, he represented the songwriter Diane Warren, who bought a lamb, Cotton, from a slaughter-only auction at a Santa Barbara County fair after the boy who raised Cotton asked for her help. "The fair refused to turn over Cotton alive and said it would only deliver his meat," Gordon said. "Ms. Warren retained us, and we acquired an emergency court order providing a last-minute stay of execution against the slaughterhouse."

If the point of livestock programs is to get young people accustomed to raising farm animals for auction and slaughter but some youngsters get to the auction and change their minds, then the organizers should abide by the children's decisions. Did the kids fail to accept the realities of raising animals for slaughter? Sure. So they may not become future factory farmers of America. That's fine. Educational programs, including those through 4-H, are supposed to offer young people a chance to discover what they want to do — or not do — with their lives.

I eat meat. I understand that animals get killed for food on my plate — and they generally lead far more miserable lives than Cedar did. But fair officials trying to force a youngster into participating in the slaughter of an animal is not only ridiculous, it's also cruel.

Advancing Law for Animals

JESSICA LONG'S then-9-year-old daughter, identified in court records as E.L., with her goat, Cedar.

It's almost fair season again. The Shasta event starts in late June. Maybe fairs, along with 4-H and Future Farmers of America, should consider having exhibitions of animals that show what goes into caring for farm animals without a terminal auction. Or young animal owners could be allowed to opt out of the terminal auction — an option that should be made clear to everyone. Perhaps there could be an auction of animals for other roles, such as working at weed abatement or being part of a school program.

Here is one youngster who decided she couldn't be part of this food chain — or more specifically let her goat be part of it. On the 4-H website, the organization promises that its projects will help kids "to grow confidence, independence, resilience, and compassion." I'd say this young girl demonstrated all those when she decided to pull her goat from the fair.

— Carla Hall,
a member of the editorial board

Is Ridley-Thomas sinner, saint or a third choice?

In response to his conviction, he's been lavishly praised. That's creating cognitive dissonance.

NICHOLAS GOLDBERG

The reaction to former L.A. City Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas' conviction for bribery, conspiracy and fraud has been, to say the least, highly unusual.

As both my colleague Erika D. Smith and a subsequent news article pointed out, Ridley-Thomas is not facing the public disgust, outrage and condemnation that usually accompany a corruption verdict, but, on the contrary, is receiving "tributes instead of scorn."

Shortly after the jury found him guilty of seven felonies last week, the mayor of Los Angeles called Ridley-Thomas "a thought leader" and "a champion for our city." A former City Council colleague called him "the relentless advocate, the unstoppable force." The people of his community remembered him as a 40-year veteran of activism and politics who devoted his life to public service.

This outpouring of support and gratitude for a convicted felon seems to be causing some confusion. Which is Ridley-Thomas really, people seem to be asking — a saint or a sinner?

Why, they want to know, is a man who is receiving such enthusiastic praise from public officials and from his constituents facing the possibility of several years in prison? Should we consider him a good man who spent a lifetime fighting effectively for marginalized and needy constituents in neglected neighborhoods, or a self-serving, bribe-taking pol who abused his power for his own personal gain?

Some of his supporters are apparently angry that the government would even bother to prosecute a man who has done so much for Los Angeles. Some have concluded that he must have been railroaded or subjected to a witch hunt or racially targeted or victimized in some other travesty of justice.

And I guess a travesty might have occurred. Maybe the jury got it wrong; maybe there was no quid pro quo and he was unjustly convicted. Ridley-Thomas, who has denied wrongdoing from the start, will certainly have an opportunity to make that argument when he appeals his case. I wish him luck; I too have known and admired him for many years.

But there is another possible explanation, and that is that both versions of the narrative are true, that Ridley-Thomas is both an ardent and effective fighter for his constituents *and* a bribe taker. Sure, there's some cognitive dissonance required to take that in. But isn't that the truth about human beings? We contain multitudes.

Ridley-Thomas can be the reformer of the Los Angeles Police Department, the champion of reopening Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital, the fighter against homelessness and the caring public servant with deep ties to an underserved, marginalized community — *and* the guy who took special benefits for his son, Sebastian, from the then-dean of USC's social work program in return for supporting a county contract for the university. Prosecutors said he accepted free graduate school tuition and a paid professorship for Sebastian.

Irfan Khan Los Angeles Times

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS, center, arrives in court with his attorneys.

Ridley-Thomas can be the caring public servant with deep ties to an underserved community *and* the guy who took special benefits for his son.

It's possible because people are complicated. They're inconsistent. They can be tempted — and sometimes they succumb, especially when their children are involved.

Many people suggested in the L.A. Times stories that Ridley-Thomas' crimes are outweighed by all he accomplished over the years. That's a matter of opinion, but I think it's probably true. It's also true that removing him from government will deal a blow to the city, the region and the communities he represented.

But even if his good works outweigh his crimes, they don't excuse them. The simple truth is that he didn't have the right to take valuable favors in return for official acts, which is what the jury concluded he did.

Selling your office for personal gain is something that cannot be tolerated. The fact that he's 68 years old, that he did it for his son, that he might have supported the USC contracts even if he hadn't been offered a bribe and that his council district will go unrepresented for some period of time — none of that has any bearing on whether he is guilty.

Like Councilman José Huizar and Councilman Mitchell Englander before him, Ridley-Thomas was found to have betrayed the public trust.

Does that mean that all his years of doing good are meaningless and should count for nothing? Of course not.

Ridley-Thomas' life story and all the work he's done and the benefits he's brought to L.A. — and any other mitigating circumstances his supporters want to highlight — are totally appropriate subjects for his sentencing, which is scheduled for Aug. 21. It is common for family members, friends, colleagues and associates of the defendant to submit letters in advance explaining why leniency is warranted.

Who is Mark Ridley-Thomas in his totality? He's complex and contradictory like the rest of us, I suspect. The jury weighed the evidence of his guilt; the judge must weigh the man in full before deciding what his sentence should be.

@Nick_Goldberg

LETTERS

Francine Orr Los Angeles Times

MARINA ORLOVETSKY, who grew up in Ukraine, hugs 18-year-old Alex Bogancha at LAX on Jan. 14

Good deeds paid back

Re "Courage and compassion help change war refugee's 'destiny,' " Column One, April 4

With tears streaming, I read your article on the descendants of Ukrainian Holocaust survivors helping the descendants of the family that sheltered their ancestors during World War II.

My late mother was from Kharkov, Ukraine (now known as Kharkiv). She was a survivor who never spoke of what really happened to her parents, brother and one sister who did not survive. She was "lucky" to be evacuated to Siberia and live.

To read about the Bogancha family's righteousness during World War II, and how now a group of individuals came together to help this family's descendants during the present war in Ukraine, is a lesson to be taught. At a time when antisemitism is on the rise and more people deny or do not want to remember the past, I am heartened to see this emotional story on the front page, and on the day before Passover.

As was said in your article, good deeds will be paid back 1,000 times.

Esther Friedberg
Studio City

::

What a moving piece about the Ukrainian Bogancha family and their son who is attending college in Santa Monica.

I'm part of a group from Congregation Adat Shalom in West L.A. and Temple Akiba in Culver City helping to settle the rest of the family once they arrive from Austria, settling them either in Santa Monica or in Culver City. We are connected to and aided by HIAS, an organization that helps settle refugees. Their arrival will be another joyous reunion at LAX.

Personally, my father was aided by HIAS 100 years ago this year. Helping this family of Ukrainian refugees is a most important endeavor.

Sandra Helman
Venice

::

I was thrilled seeing Tuesday's front page. There was nothing about corruption, flooding or other natural disasters.

There was a feature on how one generation helped another. It was heartwarming to read about good people helping one another.

I was amazed at how Marina Orlovetsky found Anna Dawson, a Holocaust survivor, and then Alex Bogancha in Ukraine. I cried when I read Anna died just before Alex arrived in the U.S. I laughed when I read Alex loves L.A. and went to the beach, the Santa Monica Pier, Malibu and Hollywood, and is looking forward to visiting Disneyland once the rest of his family arrives.

Thank you for reporting this uplifting story.

Leslye Borden
Rancho Palos Verdes

Disappointed in Ridley-Thomas

Re "Why Angelenos should be angry with Ridley-Thomas," Opinion, April 5

Erin Aubrey Kaplan is spot on about suspended Los Angeles City Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas. It is precisely because Ridley-Thomas served an underfunded and underappreciated section of the city and is a seasoned politician that we should be angry over the behavior that led to his corruption conviction.

This isn't holding him to a higher standard — just the letter of the law.

I live in Ridley-Thomas' area, and I have seen him pushing a baby pram through the neighborhood. I was so proud to cross paths with him.

Now, I am not sure what I would say to him, because while I understand that he did good for Los Angeles, he also shamed himself and disappointed his voters.

Randy Farhi
Leimert Park

Benefit of the doubt for Trump

Re "This all started back in 2016," letters, April 6

A letter writer asked with regard to the Trump indictment, "What happened to presumed innocent until proven guilty?"

As president, Donald Trump was documented by the Washington Post to have lied to or misled the American people more than 30,000 times. He has bullied those who have tried to hold him to account, putting them in great danger. He has supported racists and actual criminals who are still in jail.

It beggars the mind to presume him innocent of anything.

Peter Maradudin
Seattle

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OP-ED

NOAH BERGER Associated Press

FLOODWATERS surround homes and vehicles in the Monterey County community of Pajaro after a levee breach in March.

California's other water problem

This winter's atmospheric rivers and the snowmelt to come reveal a threat our drought-racked state overlooks.

By Jeffrey Mount and Brett Sanders

For much of the past decade, Californians have been fixated on drought, and rightly so. But the flipside of the state's volatile climate returned this year, reminding us that "normal" in a land of extremes can be either very wet or very dry.

A dozen or more atmospheric rivers have caused more than $5 billion in damage in the state, with more damage expected when the Sierra Nevada snowpack melts in the coming weeks. State, federal and local governments need to give the risk of such floods the kind of attention we give droughts for several reasons.

First, the potential economic damages of large floods well exceed those of droughts. And floods can be lethal.

In the Los Angeles Basin alone, almost half a million people live in areas at high risk of flooding, with more than $50 billion worth of property exposed to even a modest flood. The damages of a very large, statewide flood — like the floods of 1862 — would exceed $1 trillion.

Second, the climate shift that is making droughts more intense will also boost the intensity of winter storms, increasing flood risks.

Third, as recent work at UC Irvine has shown, flood preparedness efforts tend to focus narrowly on meeting the bare-minimum federal standards — standards few floodplain managers consider adequate. This approach vastly underestimates the magnitude of flood risks.

Official floodplain maps are either out of date or inaccurate, and they fail to account for the changing climate. Our flood management infrastructure, meanwhile, is aging: Most of California's levees, dams, coastal protections and flood walls and channels are more than 75 years old.

Finally, flood management is a social justice issue. As the recent levee failures on the Pajaro River showed, low-income communities that lack resources for flood protection and recovery are especially vulnerable. The UC Irvine study demonstrated that the L.A. region's flood risk falls disproportionately on low-income, predominantly Black communities. Federal flood risk assessment methods help perpetuate these patterns because they favor solutions that protect the most valuable properties.

How do we turn things around? Putting flood management on par with drought management will require addressing several big issues.

First, we need to identify the risks and appropriate responses more accurately with our changing climate in mind. Communities and governments need to work together to increase resilience, particularly for the most vulnerable populations. The state can get ahead of the federal government by promoting innovative ways of assessing risks and funding disaster insurance.

The same risk assessments can be used to guide land use. The most cost-effective risk management strategy is to discourage new construction in areas at high risk of flooding. In the Central Valley, the state Legislature has recognized that by requiring a level of urban flood protection that is higher than the minimum federal standard.

Second, all levels of government must renew investment in aging and inadequate flood management infrastructure. This has been recognized as a top priority by the Newsom and Biden administrations, the state Legislature and many local governments, but substantive action and a long-term funding plan are still needed.

As PPIC reports have highlighted, flood control is often a "fiscal orphan," with constitutional restrictions making it difficult to raise local funds for the needed infrastructure. The good news is that more than $700 million in one-time state funding is available for flood improvements this fiscal year. That will help, but it's only about half what the state should be spending every year just to keep pace with the need.

Finally, flood and drought management should be integrated for maximum efficacy. That means using floodwaters to recharge groundwater basins; making more room for rivers to accommodate floods and improve ecosystems; adding more green spaces to our cities to provide shade during heat waves and absorb runoff during storms; and employing new technology to ensure reservoirs provide both water supply and flood control. Innovations like this are starting to occur across California, but they need to be scaled up to help us manage flood risks while also getting us through dry times.

There's room for optimism about the benefits of linking flood and drought management. Much of our aging flood infrastructure was not designed for water supply but rather to sweep water quickly to the ocean. Communities that start to make flood infrastructure a more integral part of their water supply planning can address both problems.

California has a right to be obsessed with drought. But that obsession must not lead us to neglect the threat of floods, which pose such high risks for human safety and the economy. The storms of the past winter, and the snowmelt-fueled deluges we can expect this spring, are a reminder that we should be equally preoccupied with floods.

JEFFREY MOUNT is a senior fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California's Water Policy Center. BRETT SANDERS is a professor of civil and environmental engineering at the Samueli School of Engineering at UC Irvine.

How Newsom could really go after Big Oil

The governor's actions on fossil fuels — or lack thereof — don't always match his rhetoric.

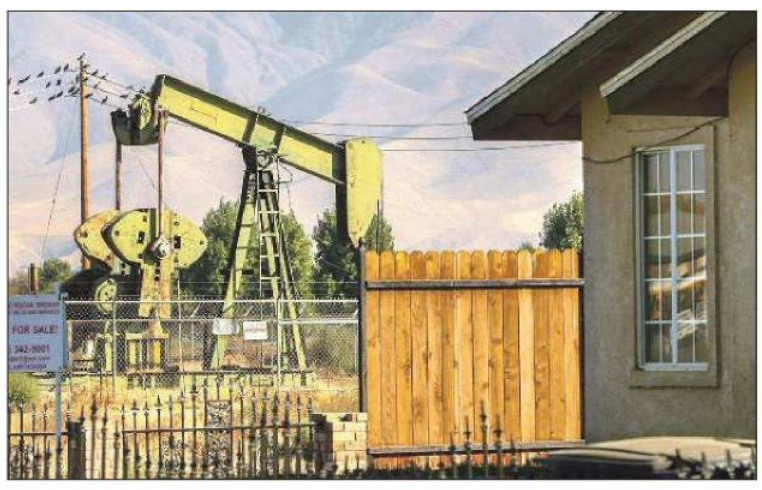
By Brandon Dawson

California politicians promise to protect the environment a lot more than they actually do. For environmental advocates like me, reconciling a politician's public statements on environmental issues with their actions doesn't take much time: Simply put, there is no reconciling them.

Gov. Gavin Newsom's stance on oil and gas is no exception. Late last year, the governor called for a special legislative session to hold oil and gas companies accountable for gouging California consumers when gasoline prices spiked last fall by imposing a penalty on excess profits. The bill that came out of the session in March fell short of the governor's goals, settling for requiring more industry transparency.

Environmental groups, including Sierra Club California, nevertheless supported the measure as a step toward regulating an industry that was hurting the working class and overheating the planet at the same time. Newsom himself announced "a new sheriff in town" and claimed to have "brought Big Oil to their knees."

And yet his administration continues to capitulate to the oil industry in other important ways. Newsom's public determination to take on this industry differs significantly from what goes on behind closed doors.



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

THE STATE needs to tackle the thousands of abandoned oil wells in Kern County and other California communities.

For instance, after the fossil fuel industry used the state's referendum process to stall a critical law banning new or reworked oil and gas wells within 3,200 feet of homes, schools, parks and healthcare facilities, the governor decried the move. He said in a statement that he was proud to have signed the setback measure, Senate Bill 1137, "to stop new oil drilling in our neighborhoods and protect California families."

Since Newsom's statement, however, his administration's oil agency, the California Geologic Energy Management Division, or CalGEM, has approved hundreds of permits to rework existing oil and gas wells and continue dangerous operations within setback zones. CalGEM has approved a total of 897 permits since the beginning of the year, 62% of which are within the zones that would be protected by SB 1137.

Reworking of existing wells is a significant source of pollution that puts communities at elevated risk of asthma, cancer and other illnesses. Environmental justice advocates fought for decades to secure setbacks from these operations, only to see CalGEM continue to rubber-stamp permits while the governor stood by.

Newsom is obviously aware of the fossil fuel industry's repercussions for California communities and the environment. Other departments in his administration have taken steps to advance clean air, and Newsom publicly champions them. But CalGEM, the agency charged with "protecting public health, safety, and the environment in its oversight of the oil, natural gas, and geothermal industries," clearly missed the memo.

The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in the recently released final part of its sixth assessment of the global climate, calls for cutting two-thirds of global carbon pollution by 2035 and ending reliance on oil and gas by 2040. In the report, U.N. Secretary General António Guterres says we must "massively fast-track climate efforts by every country and every sector and on every timeframe. Our world needs climate action on all fronts: everything, everywhere, all at once." For California to do our part to meet these demands, Newsom must align his administration's actions with his public statements.

There are a few more concrete steps Newsom can take toward that end. First, he can direct CalGEM to stop issuing new and rework permits, prioritizing the rescinding of permits within the setback zone that would be established by SB 1137.

He should also organize a government-wide effort to plan California's transition from oil and gas to clean, renewable energy. This transition must consider the needs of the communities that will be most affected by the transition, especially those that consist of predominantly low-income households and people of color.

Finally, he must hold the oil industry accountable for cleaning up abandoned oil wells. Thousands of wells across the state have been abandoned by the industry, and the often exorbitant cleanup costs are wrongly falling on California taxpayers. CalGEM recently spent more than $34 million in taxpayer money to clean up 171 oil wells in Santa Barbara's Cat Canyon alone.

These steps are practical and immediately achievable. If Newsom wants to live up to his reputation as a champion for the climate and an opponent of Big Oil, he must do more than just promise to protect our environment and health.

BRANDON DAWSON is the director of Sierra Club California.

Resist the urge to force Trump's silence

Issuing a gag order won't work and could violate the lst Amendment.

By Erwin Chemerinsky

Judge Juan Manuel Merchan should resist the temptation to impose a gag order on Donald Trump limiting his public statements. Just hours after Merchan admonished Trump to refrain from inflammatory public comments, Trump gave an angry speech at Mar-a-Lago attacking the prosecutor, the judge, the judge's family and much else. Trump blatantly defied Merchan's admonition.

The judge surely is frustrated and may be considering placing a gag order on Trump to restrict what he can say publicly about the case. But such an order would be a mistake.

As Merchan observed at Tuesday's hearing, prior restraints on speech are generally considered to violate the 1st Amendment. In 1976, the Supreme Court ruled that placing gag orders on the press to keep it from reporting on pending cases is almost never acceptable, even when the goal is to protect a defendant's right to a fair trial.

The court, though, has never ruled on whether gag orders on parties to lawsuits and their lawyers are permissible. In the absence of direction from the Supreme Court, some courts have imposed such gag orders in other high-profile cases. But prior restraints on speech are nearly always considered a violation of the 1st Amendment. Trump's candidacy for the presidency might raise another problem.

More important, it's very unlikely that Trump would comply with such a gag order. He undoubtedly would rail against it as another injustice and another way to persecute him. No one who has watched the Trump show over the years can believe that he has the ability to restrain himself.

This would put the judge in an impossible position. On the one hand, he could ignore Trump's violating the gag order. But then why issue it in the first place? Alternatively, he could hold Trump in contempt for violating the gag order, a charge that is punishable by jail. But doing that would heighten the problem and fuel more divisiveness.

As outrageous as it is to hear Trump attack the judge, the prosecutor and the proceedings, there is little to be gained by ordering him to shut up.

The traditional argument for gag orders on lawyers and parties is to limit pretrial publicity and enhance the likelihood of a fair trial. That rationale, however, is highly dubious because there is little evidence that pretrial publicity, including self-serving statements of trial participants, actually matters to the outcome of cases. In this instance, given all the publicity surrounding the case, it is impossible to imagine that additional Trump statements will make the slightest difference in the outcome.

Moreover, regardless of whether there is a gag order, selecting a jury for a Trump trial inherently will be very difficult because everyone has strong opinions about Donald Trump and likely about this prosecution. Merchan will need to take extraordinary steps to protect the jurors, including keeping their identities secret to protect them from intimidation.

The impulse for a gag order on Trump may be to prevent him from exhorting his followers to engage in threats or even violence. If Trump incites violence or illegal activity, he can be punished if it is proven that he has done so. But courts have not allowed gag orders or prior restraints on speech before any incitement takes place.

Judges like to exercise control and Merchan is undoubtedly upset at Trump blatantly disobeying him. But the better course in this situation is to do nothing and let Trump speak.

ERWIN CHEMERINSKY is a contributing writer to Opinion and dean of the UC Berkeley School of Law.

Legal experts reject city's lawsuit as baseless

[**Lawsuit,** from A1]
the public's ability to request, analyze, and publish public records."

Susan Seager, an attorney for Camacho, said in a statement that her client "will fight the City's effort to censor his journalism about police, which is a matter of paramount concern." Camacho declined to comment.

Legal experts uniformly rejected the lawsuit as baseless and ripe for dismissal under the 1st Amendment and other well-established legal protections for journalists.

"This is a Hail Mary, desperation play by the city," said David Loy, legal director of the California First Amendment Coalition.

"The city is on very weak legal grounds," said Erwin Chemerinsky, dean of the UC Berkeley School of Law.

"This isn't even a close call," said Ken Paulson, former editor in chief of USA Today and now director of the Free Speech Center at Middle Tennessee State University.

The lawsuit follows weeks of controversy after the Los Angeles Police Department's release of the names, photographs and other identifying information of more than 9,300 officers in response to a public records request and subsequent litigation by Camacho.

Hamid Khan, a coordinator with Stop LAPD Spying, said Camacho "shared" the officers' images and information with his organization. The group then posted them online as part of a public, searchable database called "Watch the Watchers," which includes each officer's name, ethnicity, rank, date of hire, division/bureau, serial number and photo.

The union that represents rank-and-file LAPD officers subsequently sued Chief Michel Moore over the release of the photos, hoping to force the department to stop disclosing such images and try to claw back those already released. More than 300 LAPD officers who claim to work in sensitive assignments have also given notice that they intend to sue the city for negligence and for allegedly endangering their lives by releasing the images.

MARK BOSTER Los Angeles Times

"THIS IS a Hail Mary, desperation play by the city," one 1st Amendment expert says of Los Angeles' lawsuit against a local journalist and an activist group.

Robert Rico, legal counsel for the Los Angeles Police Protective League, has said the union in its lawsuit will ask a judge to force the Watch the Watchers website to be taken down until the city determines which officers' images should be excluded for security reasons.

The city attorney's office, which is also seeking to have the officers' photos removed from the website, said Thursday that its goal was protecting officers "whose lives and families' lives could be in grave danger as a result of this exposure."

Seager questioned the alleged danger posed by the photos' release. Contrary to the city's lawsuit, she said in her statement, the city attorney's office "hand-delivered" the photos to her client in September along with a letter that said in part: "images of officers working in an undercover capacity as of the time the pictures were downloaded (end of July 2022) are not included."

"The disclosure was not 'inadvertent' or a 'mistake,' " she wrote. After releasing the records to Camacho, the city "now is trying to rewrite history by claiming it wishes it had withheld photos of both undercover officers and officers who 'serve in sensitive assignments.' "

"This is an impossibly broad category of officers that could include just about any officer's work at some point during their career," Seager said.

Legal experts said city officials may be suing Camacho and the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition to show they are taking the officers' and the union's concerns seriously and making a good-faith effort to get the images off the internet.

However, that doesn't mean it will work, the experts said.

"The U.S. Supreme Court has made clear that government cannot restrain publication of information by a news organization," Paulson said. "That would certainly apply in this case."

Paulson cited the famous Pentagon Papers case, in which the Supreme Court ruled that the federal government could not prevent newspapers from publishing classified reports about the Vietnam War that had been leaked by a military analyst.

"When you recognize that the highest court in the land — dealing with an argument from the U.S. government that these documents would pose irreparable harm to the security of the United States — still concluded that news organizations could publish the information, then you know [L.A.'s lawsuit] is not a close call," Paulson said.

Paulson said his impression from the complaint was that the city was embarrassed by its own blunder, facing litigation from officers, and making a futile effort to show that it had at least tried to claw the images back.

"This lawsuit really feels like an exercise in saving face," he said.

Kelli Sager, a practicing 1st Amendment lawyer in California who has represented the Los Angeles Times in the past, agreed.

"At this point everyone on the internet has these photographs, so I don't see any legal basis for the city to be demanding the return of them or for them to be taken down from the website," Sager said. "This is a reaction to the city being sued, so they can say they are doing something."

Sager said the city's complaint fails for multiple reasons, but in part because the images have already been published online for weeks.

"The courts have said once it's become public, then the cat is out of the bag, the horse is out of the barn, there is nothing you can lawfully do, because the justification for it would be to keep the information secret, and that's no longer possible," Sager said.

Both Paulson and Sager said it does not matter if city officials hadn't intended to give Camacho the photographs, or if they had agreed in prior litigation that photographs of undercover officers would not be included in the release of documents. The fact is, they gave him the photographs.

Chemerinsky said the law "is clearly established that when the press lawfully obtains something, they're allowed to truthfully report it," and Camacho obviously obtained the images lawfully here.

It's simply too late, he said, for the city to change its mind.

Loy noted there is a California Supreme Court ruling that said the government has, in limited circumstances, a right to try to claw back certain documents that were inappropriately released, but this case is distinct from that one.

Here, "the city is not just asking for the documents back," he said. "The city wants to stop the journalist and Stop LAPD Spying from actually further posting what they already had. That's a prior restraint, and that's blatantly unconstitutional under the 1st Amendment."

Several city officials have said publicly that the responsibility for releasing the images was the city's.

Moore apologized for the disclosure in a department-wide email. In an interview with The Times, he acknowledged that the city had erred in releasing the images and assured officers that he has taken steps to address their safety concerns.

A spokesman for the police union told The Times that the union is more concerned about the city's "colossal blunder" than with the journalist who first received the photos or the watchdog group that published them. The department's independent inspector general has launched an investigation into how the records were released.

On Tuesday, Mayor Karen Bass declined to say whether she supported the city's lawsuit against a journalist, but called the release of the images an "egregious mistake" and said she feared it would lead to more officers leaving the LAPD at a time when its ranks are already diminished.

Bass said those responsible for the release "need to be held fully accountable."

The city's action drew strong denouncements in local journalism circles.

Cerise Castle, Knock LA's managing editor, said city officials routinely try to suppress efforts by independent journalists and those at smaller news outlets to publish potentially damaging information about police.

Times staff writer Julia Wick contributed to this report.

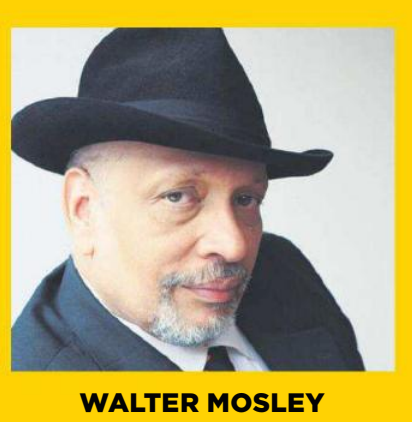
Los Angeles Times
FESTIVAL OF BOOKS
APRIL 22-23, 2023 | UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

AUTHORS YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS

ROBIN ARZÓN
Author of
"Strong Baby"
Sunday, April 23

JOAN BAEZ
Author of "Am I Pretty When I Fly?
An Album of Upside Down Drawings"
Sunday, April 23

RACHEL LINDSAY
Author of
"Real Love"
Saturday, April 22



WALTER MOSLEY
Author of
"Every Man a King"
Sunday, April 23

DANNY PELLEGRINO
Author of
"How Do I Un-Remember This?
Unfortunately True Stories"
Saturday, April 22

KATIE PORTER
Author of
"I Swear: Politics Is
Messier Than My Minivan"
Sunday, April 23

MARYTZA K. RUBIO
Author of
"Maria, Maria & Other Stories"
Saturday, April 22

JOE TROHMAN
Author of
"None of this Rocks: A Memoir"
Sunday, April 23

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CALIFORNIA

Falcon interest to crest with live hatch

Eggs in nest at UC Berkeley's bell tower about to have their moment in spotlight.

By Nathan Solis

Four falcon eggs atop a bell tower at UC Berkeley are about to get a crack at fame as they join a storied lineage at the university.

On Tuesday, UC Berkeley — and the many online fans of the school's peregrine falcons — will celebrate Hatch Day, when the chicks are expected to peck their way out of their shells and make their debut, according to bird experts who monitor the nest.

Once they emerge, these chicks will join a bird dynasty that boasts an online fandom that follows the falcons' movements with the rapt attention an audience might give to a reality TV show.

The last few seasons of the bird drama have featured a love triangle, a mysterious death and a stepfather who swooped in to help a single mother.

Now comes the possible addition of four new birds into the mix. The momentous occasion will be livestreamed and projected onto a large screen near the campus.

For bird watchers, the day is a chance to celebrate Annie and Lou, the parents of the latest clutch in the nest. They are currently taking turns sitting on the eggs, and their switching places and other activities are captured on webcams atop the Campanile tower at the Berkeley campus.

The group Cal Falcons, which is not part of the university, watches over the nest and posts video clips to social media channels with updates on how the falcons are holding up.

In one clip, the falcons noisily chirp at each other as rain pelts their nest and they scramble to sit on the eggs.

"I wish I understood falcon language," one person wrote in the comments.

"Such squabbling, and in front of the children!" another person wrote.

Since 2016 when the first falcon couple made a nest atop the tower, viewers have come to see the birds as hav-

[See **Falcon,** B2]

Photographs by Genaro Molina Los Angeles Times

WAYNE COWINGS JR. in a tent on skid row in downtown L.A. Three people on Wednesday were found dead of drug overdoses, possibly related to fentanyl, at 649 Lofts, a Skid Row Housing Trust property.

On skid row, overdose deaths 'become the norm'

Residents there urge L.A. to do more to stop fentanyl

By Ruben Vives

Cecilia Montoya saw body bags being pushed out of her skid row apartment building on gurneys after three people were found dead of drug overdoses, possibly related to fentanyl, on Wednesday.

The sight was disturbing but not shocking to Montoya.

On the sixth floor, where the deaths of the woman and two men occurred, she often sees people using drugs, both in hallways and in apartments.

Montoya said that since she moved there about a year ago, three other people have died of overdoses at 649 Lofts, which provides housing to underprivileged people and is owned by the nonprofit Skid Row Housing Trust, whose 29 residential buildings have fallen into extreme disrepair.

CECILIA MONTOYA, a 649 Lofts tenant, says she often sees drug use there.

"I had never seen a row of body bags like that, other than on the TV," said Montoya, 52, a recovering meth addict.

On Friday, a judge will consider a request from the Los Angeles city attorney that the trust's properties be taken over by a court-appointed receiver.

In court earlier this week, Deputy City Atty. Steven Son described the situation as a "humanitarian emergency," adding that conditions have de-

[See **Skid row,** B2]

Some counties boomed, others shrank

Big takeaway: Many Californians relocated during pandemic, but trends are resettling.

By Terry Castleman

A prison closed in Lassen County. College campuses welcomed students back in Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz counties, and thousands of new housing units were added in Yolo County.

While California's overall population continued to shrink, new census data show that during the pandemic period of the last two years, population swings have affected large and small counties across the state, the result of COVID-19 health protocols, the return of employees to workplaces, new housing construction and various other factors.

Several large urban counties — including Los Angeles, San Francisco and Santa Barbara — have started to rebound from population losses that hit hardest at the beginning of the pandemic.

Meanwhile in rural counties such as Lassen and Yolo, population numbers have fluctuated because of local changes, such as the closing of a prison or construction of new housing.

The big takeaway from the latest census data: Californians relocated quite a bit in response to the pandemic and other factors, but many counties are now starting to resettle into the pre-pandemic status quo.

[See **Population,** B5]

Fired teachers sue Kanye West over school

Wrongful-termination lawsuit alleges Donda Academy violated health, safety codes.

By Christian Martinez

At Kanye West's Donda Academy, the performer's Christian K-12 school, students were subjected to unsafe, unregulated and unsanitary conditions, two former teachers allege in a lawsuit against West and others filed this week in Los Angeles County Superior Court.

Cecilia Hailey and Chekarey Byers, the only Black female teachers at the school, were fired after they voiced concerns over the conditions to administrators, according to the complaint.

The school, named for West's mother, operated in Simi Valley before moving to its current location in Chatsworth, according to California Department of Education records.

The women are suing West for retaliation, wrongful termination, discrimination and withheld wages.

West's attorney, Gregory K. Nelson, declined to comment on the lawsuit, saying he had not seen it as of Thursday afternoon.

Hailey, in an interview Thursday with The Times, said she was "very, very disturbed" by what she saw in her time at the school.

"We are responsible to make sure that we're giving children a quality education, and when you don't, you are really disturbing the life of that child," Hailey said. "That's just not right."

According to the complaint, Hailey was hired as a substitute teacher at Donda Academy in the fall, around the time West made a series of antisemitic comments on social media and in televised interviews.

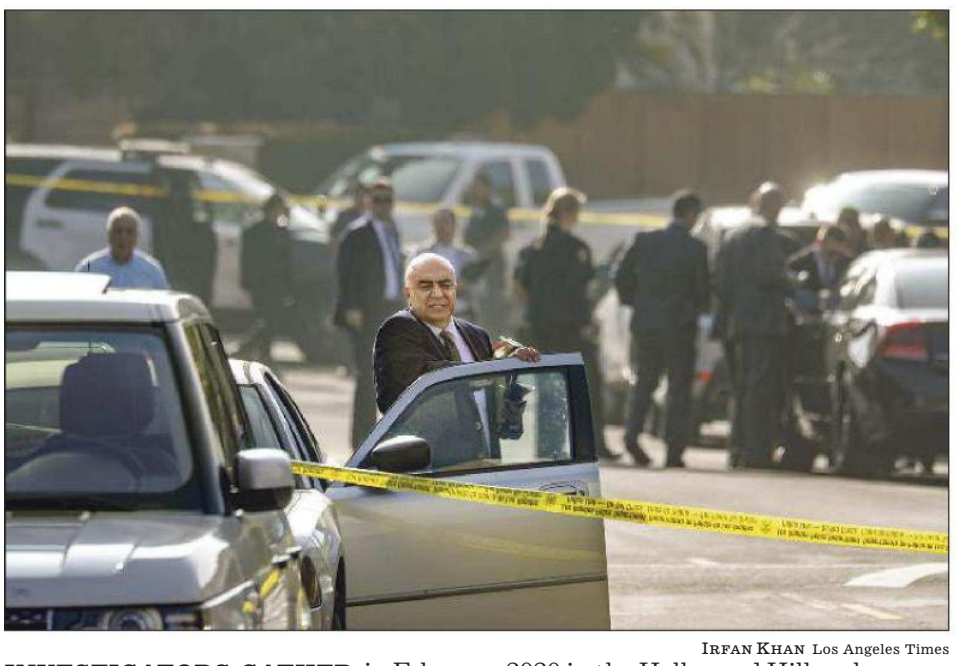
In the wake of the comments, West was dropped by his talent agency, CAA, and Adidas ended its partnership with the rapper. The sportswear company stated that it expected to lose nearly $250 million because of the move.

Hailey said she had seen interviews West had done before her hiring, but said, "I didn't go into the school because it was Kanye West's school. I went into the school

[See **Donda,** B5]

Man pleads guilty in rapper Pop Smoke's death

Defendant is sentenced to four years and two months for role in home invasion



Irfan Khan Los Angeles Times

INVESTIGATORS GATHER in February 2020 in the Hollywood Hills, where New York rapper Pop Smoke was fatally shot while on a four-day trip to L.A.

By Matthew Ormseth

A 20-year-old charged in the killing of rapper Pop Smoke pleaded guilty in juvenile court Thursday, admitting he entered a Hollywood Hills mansion as a teenager in February 2020 intending to rob the rising star, who was shot to death in a struggle with his assailants.

The defendant pleaded guilty in an Inglewood courtroom to voluntary manslaughter and home invasion robbery; he was the first to admit guilt of four defendants charged in the death of Pop Smoke, whose real name was Bashar Barakah Jackson.

Judge J. Christopher Smith sentenced the defendant to four years and two months in the Secure Youth Treatment Facility but warned he could remain in juvenile custody until he was 25. The judge declined to apply the two years and eight months he has already spent in juvenile hall toward his sentence.

Three others are charged in Jackson's death: two juvenile defendants, 15 and 17 at the time of the homicide, and Corey Walker, who was 19. A judge has issued a court order barring the media from identifying the juvenile defendants.

A New York native, Jackson, 20, was on a four-day trip to L.A. when he posted a photo on Instagram of a gift bag from his favorite clothing brand, Amiri. The label revealed the address of the home where he'd been staying on Hercules Drive.

That night, a group of

[See **Pop Smoke,** B2]

Wrongful-death claim is filed
Man's family seeks $20 million, alleging San Bernardino County deputies killed him during his mental health crisis. **B3**

Woman is guilty in cop's killing
The defendant admits her role in the fatal attempted robbery of an off-duty LAPD officer last year. **B3**

A chance to get a henge photo
The Saturday sunrise is expected to align with San Franicisco's streets. If only the weather is good. **B3**

Pothole repairs are proceeding
City of Los Angeles anticipates having all of the work done by the end of April. **B3**

Lottery **B2**

SPORTS ON THE BACK: MLB's pitch clock brings challenges, strategies for players. **B10**

GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

PLACIDO PENTON sits outside an encampment where a man in a nearby tent is suspected of dying from a drug overdose Thursday. Residents of skid row say fatal overdoses there are nothing out of the ordinary.

Overdose deaths in skid row housing hint at wider problem

[**Skid row,** from B1]
teriorated in the buildings so much that there are "truly life safety issues."

Opened in 2021 on Wall Street, 649 Lofts is one of the trust's newest buildings, with 54 studio apartments. But it too has had serious problems.

A tenant with arthritis and nerve damage told The Times last month that she was trapped for several weeks on the fifth floor after the elevator broke down, and that intruders were common.

Montoya, who relies on a motorized scooter because she has lesions on her left foot, said the elevators haven't been working for the last two weeks — a regular occurrence at the building.

She has mostly stayed away from her seventh-floor apartment. When she does go up, she has to take the stairs while someone carries her scooter.

Sometimes, she avoids going to the methadone clinic because she's afraid she won't be able to return to her apartment.

People from the street make their way inside the building through an unlocked emergency door, she said.

On Thursday, the door remained unlocked but she said management had at least increased security.

"It's unfortunate it took these deaths to make that happen," she said.

Montoya said people use drugs on the fourth floor too. When people are high, they destroy lightbulbs and damage the property, she said. Once, someone tried to break into her apartment.

A spokesman with Skid Row Housing Trust could not comment immediately.

Two blocks away, near 7th and Crocker streets, skid row residents said overdose deaths have become so common that they are nothing out of the ordinary.

Aimee Crouse of Love My Neighbor Foundation said she arrived Thursday morning to help distribute meals to the homeless and noticed that coroner's officials were investigating a death across the street.

They told her the death was possibly related to a fentanyl overdose.

Cleveland Anderson, 62, said the man who died was in his 30s and known as "Cartoon."

According to Anderson, the man was in pain and screaming for help the night before. A woman in a nearby tent called paramedics, but they refused to go inside the man's tent and left without helping him, Anderson said.

Hours later, on Thursday morning, the man's brother, who lived in a tent next to him, checked on him and discovered he wasn't breathing, Anderson said. The brother asked someone for Narcan, which helps reverse an opioid overdose, but it had no effect.

"This happened to a good kid," Anderson said, gazing at the ground. "I feel depressed. I can't believe this happened."

Carl Zephyr, a longtime skid row resident, said that a month ago, he noticed a friend staggering before collapsing on the sidewalk. Zephyr rushed over and began CPR but couldn't save his friend.

"Something's got to be done about this fentanyl," Zephyr said. "It's a cold killer."

Nearby, Steven Archuleta pushed his friend, Hector Figueroa, 47, in a wheelchair.

Both men live at the Simone Hotel Apartments, where people died of fentanyl overdoses last month, they said.

"I had one die on my floor," said Archuleta, 37.

He said two people died on Figueroa's floor.

"It's become the norm here," Archuleta said. "Something's got to be done about this fentanyl, because it's worse than COVID."

Nearby in a blue tent, Wayne Cowings Jr., washed a pair of white sneakers. Cowings hadn't heard about the three deaths at 649 Lofts.

But he knows about fentanyl addiction.

He said he smokes drugs laced with fentanyl and has overdosed several times. The withdrawals are painful.

"I get body chills, my bones feel like weights and my equilibrium is all out of place," he said. "But once you take a hit, it stabilizes you. The drug hooks you."

Cowings said that sometimes after passing out, he has regained consciousness to find that he has crossed a fence into someone else's yard.

He wants to stop using drugs and has enrolled in a rehab program that starts Friday.

Man pleads guilty in fatal shooting of rising rapper in 2020

[**Pop Smoke,** from B1]
people wearing ski masks burst into Jackson's bedroom, a detective testified at a preliminary hearing. They confronted him in a shower, where one of the suspects — a 15-year-old boy — pistol-whipped the rapper and shot him three times in the back, according to testimony.

They made off with Jackson's watch, a diamond-studded Rolex they sold for $2,000, a detective said at the hearing.

Deputy Dist. Atty. Hilary Williams told a judge at a hearing in August that the defendant who pleaded guilty Thursday was no minor participant in the crime: He scouted the mansion, helped Walker recruit three other juveniles to rob Jackson and, after entering the home, remained in "constant communication" with Walker, who waited in the getaway car.

From a wiretap on his phone, detectives learned he'd committed other robberies, Williams added.

Martin Lijtmaer, the attorney for the defendant who pleaded guilty Thursday, argued his client was intellectually disabled, sparking a series of examinations and hearings over his competency to stand trial.

Jody Ward, a psychologist who examined the defendant on behalf of the prosecution, testified in August that he appeared to be faking the disability.

He was diagnosed as a child with a learning disability but tested at an "average" level in school, which he stopped attending regularly after the second grade, Ward said. Arrested for the first time at 14, he was referred to the Los Angeles County Regional Center for the Developmentally Disabled, where his IQ was gauged at just 52. Ward said this was inexplicable: Tested in school, he was found to have an IQ of 92, an average level.

A person with an IQ of 52 would have difficulty planning his behavior, act on impulse and might even be nonverbal, Ward testified. She said she found it hard to believe that "someone who should have difficulty toileting themselves would ever be brought along on a crime like this," one that required "a lot of planning, thinking through and strategizing."

After he was arrested, the defendant showed a familiarity with the judicial process that belied his alleged disability, Ward testified. He planned with his cellmate — a plant for the police, who were secretly recording the conversation — how to glean information from detectives without giving anything up himself, Ward said.

"O.J. was able to beat his case even though there was blood on his socks," he told his cellmate, according to Ward. But if all else failed, "I still got that Regional Center s—," he said, a reference to the facility where he'd been diagnosed as disabled.

A psychologist who examined the defendant at the request of his defense attorney said feigning a disability would demand "a level of sophistication that would be vastly inconsistent with past educational records, psychological testing and previous behavioral observations," according to an appellate ruling that quotes his testimony.

A judge found the defendant did have an intellectually disability but was competent to stand trial, pointing to the jailhouse recording and calls with his mother that showed he understood how the courts worked, the ruling says.

> 'I don't know how you and your friends even came to the idea to rob someone, someone whose life was taken unnecessarily.'
>
> — JUDGE J. CHRISTOPHER SMITH, addressing the defendant after sentencing

After the finding was affirmed on appeal, the defendant chose to plead guilty, said his attorney, Lijtmaer. He told the judge his client was "clearly on a path to rehabilitation."

After handing down the sentence, Smith addressed the defendant. "I don't know how you and your friends even came to the idea to rob someone, someone whose life was taken unnecessarily."

The judge noted the defendant will one day return to his family. "Mr. Jackson is not. His life is done because of what you and your friends did. You owe. You owe."

Lottery results

Tonight's Mega Millions
Estimated jackpot: $414 million
Sales close at 7:45 p.m.

For Wednesday, April 5, 2023

SuperLotto Plus
Mega number is **bold**

20-26-35-39-46—**Mega 2**
Jackpot: $47 million

Winners per category:

	No. of winners	Amount of prize(s)
5 + Mega	0	—
5	2	$20,560
4 + Mega	9	$2,284
4	325	$105
3 + Mega	497	$62
3	14,084	$10
2 + Mega	6,896	$11
1 + Mega	34,365	$2
Mega only	54,117	$1

Powerball
Powerball number is **bold**

3-5-9-42-52—**Powerball 11**
Jackpot: $170 million

California winners per category:

	No. of winners	Amount of prize(s)
5 + P-ball	0	—
5	0	—
4 + P-ball	4	$11,198
4	32	$367
3 + P-ball	116	$105
3	2,274	$6
2 + P-ball	1,900	$7
1 + P-ball	12,696	$4
P-ball only	28,371	$4

Winning jackpot ticket(s) sold in other states: None

For Thursday, April 6, 2023

Fantasy Five: 5-8-11-20-34

Daily Four: 3-4-9-1

Daily Three (midday): 7-5-1

Daily Three (evening): 9-2-5

Daily Derby:
(8) Gorgeous George
(6) Whirl Win
(5) California Classic
Race time: 1:47.73

Results on the internet:
www.latimes.com/lottery
General information:
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(Results not available at this number)

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Falcon fans eagerly await Hatch Day

[**Falcon,** from B1]
ing distinct personalities, although experts say falcons shouldn't be viewed through such a lens. But anthropomorphizing — assigning human qualities to animals — isn't all bad, Cal Falcons volunteer Mary Malec said. It's kept viewers enrapt.

"Sometimes it's hard to listen to," Malec said about people weighing in online on the decisions the birds make as though they were plot twists in a *telenovela*.

Falcons are not in the business of making good drama, she added; their motivation is survival.

In late 2016, two peregrine falcons were spotted on the Berkeley campus, and in the following months a makeshift nest was found on top of a sandbag on the clock tower.

The Cal Falcons group managed to create a safe site for the falcons to nest. The falcon pair were named Annie and Grinnell, and they managed to fledge multiple chicks over the years, experts said.

It was very dramatic for the online fans and scientists when Grinnell was found wounded near a tennis club a few miles from his nest in October 2021.

Experts suspected another falcon had attacked him.

Grinnell was taken to a wildlife rehabilitation hospital and while he recuperated, Annie was seen with another male partner. The other falcon could have been one of the falcons who attacked Grinnell, experts said at the time. Fans chided Annie for going off with some other male.

But, Malec said, these are wild animals.

Cal Falcons

ANNIE, a peregrine falcon, watches over eggs that are expected to hatch Tuesday atop a UC Berkeley bell tower, an event to be livestreamed to her many fans.

"It's not that Annie is being unfaithful in any way to Grinnell," Malec said. "She's doing what is best for her survival and for the survival of the next generation of peregrines."

Grinnell eventually recovered and returned to the nest but was found dead in May 2022 not too far from campus, said Sean Peterson, a Cal Falcons supporter who is an associate professor at St. Olaf College in Minnesota.

Annie was then alone with her clutch of eggs, but within several hours of Grinnell's death, another male swooped in and took his place, Peterson said.

The online fandom dubbed the new male Alden. But after he helped save the eggs in the nest, Alden mysteriously disappeared in November 2022.

"It was just a successful mess," Peterson said. "But we don't know what happened to him."

Eventually, Lou arrived. And although Annie's latest mate is a few years younger, he seems eager to be a parent, Peterson said. The two often squawk at each other as they take turns sitting on the eggs.

Again, these are merely birds doing their thing, Peterson said, but he can understand how the falcons remind their fans of parents taking care of their children.

"They're very good parents; they care for their chicks exceptionally well. So, people really kind of resonate with that," Peterson said.

Of course, he noted, part of that is preparing hearty meals of dead birds and other prey for the young chicks. There are no jars of mashed bananas in a falcon's nest.

Hatch Day is a party for the community that has followed the birds over the years, but it's also another chapter in a remarkable turnaround for a species that was once on the brink of extinction.

Peregrine falcon populations sharply declined from the 1950s through the '70s with the liberal use of the pesticide DDT, according to ornithologists who study the species.

The insecticide made its way into the food chain and caused eggshells to become frail and brittle. It meant the mother birds could not sit on their eggs without crushing them, said Doug Bell, wildlife program manager at the East Bay Regional Park District.

By 1973, there were only five peregrine falcon nesting sites in California, Bell said. The species has managed to bounce back after several decades of conservation efforts and a federal ban on DDT. There are currently more than 400 breeding pairs in California alone, according to the state Department of Fish and Wildlife.

"I still have to pinch myself when I see a peregrine falcon: 'Wow, they're back. And they're everywhere now,' " said Bell, who grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1960s and never saw the birds in the wild.

The Berkeley falcons made their nest in an unlikely place, and it's unclear if they will remain atop the bell tower for another season. But it is clear that they've inspired people to appreciate the raptors in a whole new light.

Anne Prestridge from Orange County warned her book club last year she would be late to one of their meet-ups because the Cal Falcons scientists were hosting an online Q&A session.

The private piano teacher has long been fascinated by wildlife, but when Prestridge started following the Berkeley falcons in 2019, she found herself regularly checking the webcam feed. She was so inspired by the falcons that she decided to take a birding class so she could identify birds in her own neighborhood.

"I'm here in Orange County watching a webcam, but in my own backyard there's a pair of falcons," Prestridge said. "I just wasn't putting the two together."

L.A. says pothole repairs moving along

By Julia Wick

First came the deluge, then the damaged roads.

Relentless rain left the streets of Los Angeles pockmarked with potholes, but city officials say relief is on the way.

The city anticipates completing all pothole repair work by the end of April, Bureau of Street Services General Manager Keith Mozee said Thursday.

Crews are being diverted from other duties to focus on pothole repair, and workers are driving hundreds of miles of city streets daily to identify where repairs are needed, Mozee said.

The Bureau of Street Services' focus is on the city's major corridors, such as Sepulveda Boulevard, where Mozee spoke to reporters over the din of morning commuter traffic Thursday alongside Mayor Karen Bass, Councilmember Monica Rodriguez and several city workers in hard hats and reflective vests.

During normal conditions, pothole repair requests are typically responded to within one to three days, but the "tremendous surge" in requests has pushed that time to within 10 days, depending on conditions, Mozee said.

The department has received 19,642 pothole repair requests since December and has completed 17,459 of those, Mozee said.

"For Angelenos who have hit a pothole on their way to work or school, it's more than an inconvenience. It's also a financial burden," Bass said. "Our city is increasingly unaffordable and these damages could mean missed days at work and unaffordable costs that create trade-offs at home."

The mayor urged Angelenos to report potholes by calling the city's 311 hotline or filing a report using the 311 app.

Repairs can also be requested on the 311 website.

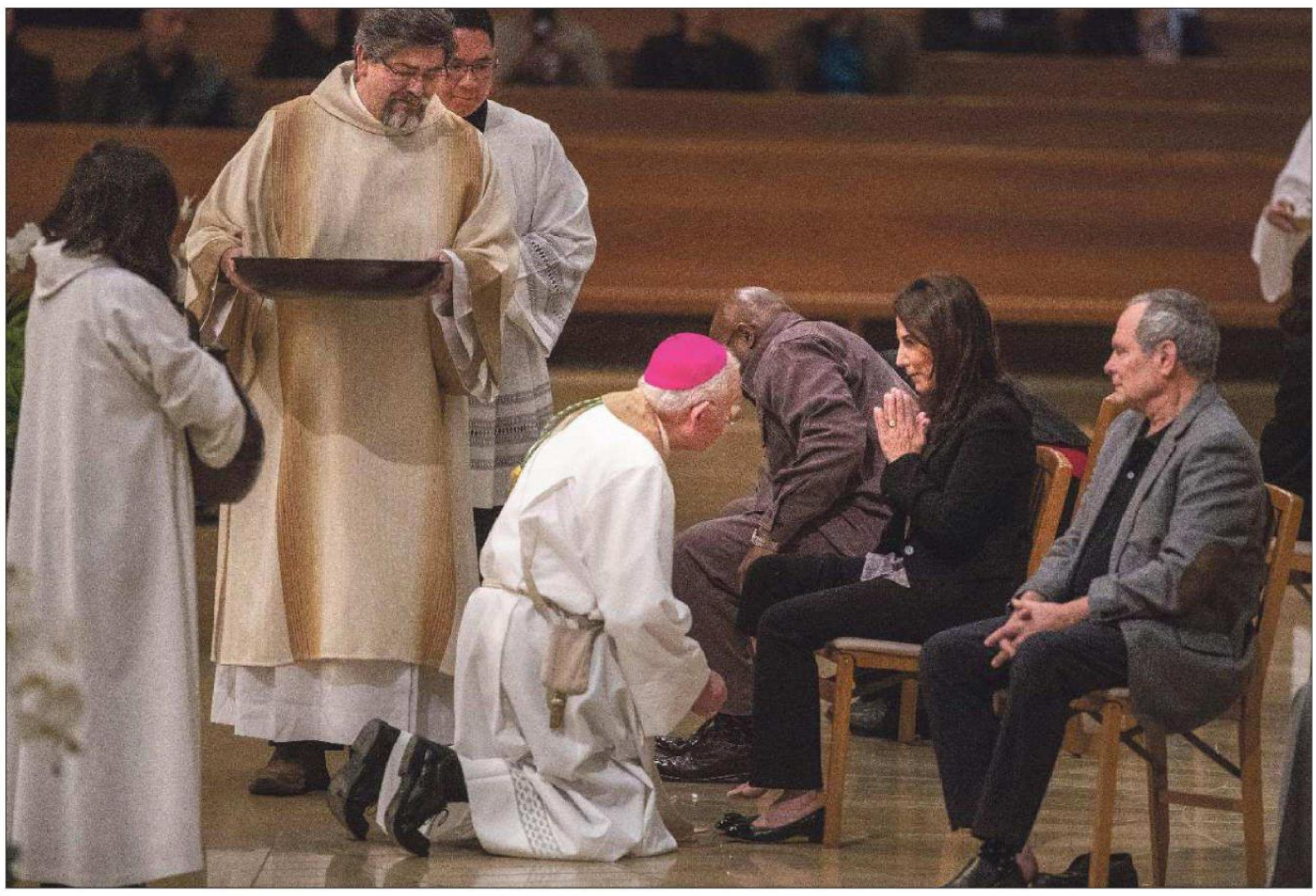
She also encouraged residents who had paid out of pocket to repair pothole-related damage to file a claim for assistance on the city clerk's website.

Filing a pothole damage claim requires knowing which government entity was responsible for maintaining that particular section of road. The city of Los Angeles is answerable for all potholes on streets within its boundaries, but highways fall within the jurisdiction of Caltrans, the state transportation department.

"Water is the kryptonite to our asphalt," Rodriguez said Thursday, referencing the reason city roads are showing so much wear and tear after a historic series of storms.

Since the start of the rainy season in October, 27.42 inches of rain has fallen in downtown Los Angeles, said National Weather Service meteorologist David Sweet.

Times staff writer Jon Healey contributed to this report.



Brian van der Brug Los Angeles Times

HOLY THURSDAY

Archbishop Jose H. Gomez washes a worshiper's feet during a Mass at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels to commemorate Jesus Christ's Last Supper with his apostles the night before his crucifixion. The ritual recalls Jesus' foot-washing of his 12 apostles.

Wrongful-death claim filed

By Salvador Hernandez

Tony Garza was once a star high school wrestler in Yucca Valley, but later in life, his family said, he didn't know how to grapple with his mental health issues.

Garza suffered from paranoia, according to relatives, and on Feb. 5, 2021, they tried to help Garza, calling San Bernardino County sheriff's deputies to perform a welfare check on him. Garza wound up following the deputies in his truck, looking for their license plates, according to his family's attorney.

Deputies arrested Garza on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon after he allegedly drove toward them.

Two years to the day of the welfare check, Garza was fatally shot by San Bernardino County sheriff's deputies during a pursuit that started in Yucca Valley and ended in Palm Springs.

The family of Garza filed a $20-million wrongful-death claim Thursday against the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, alleging the 44-year-old was shot a dozen times by deputies while he was in the middle of a mental health crisis.

"These officers shot Mr. Garza dead as he fled through the desert," Brian Olney, one of the attorneys representing Garza's family, said Thursday at a news conference. He added that Garza was failed not just by the deputies who fatally shot him but by the courts and a broken mental health system that was repeatedly unable to get Garza the help he needed.

Garza was burning personal items on his property in Yucca Valley on Feb. 5, when deputies responded to a reported box trailer fire, according to his family's attorneys. When the deputies arrived and tried to make contact, Garza fled in his vehicle, the Sheriff's Department said.

Jason Armond Los Angeles Times

RELATIVES of Tony Garza, whom San Bernardino County deputies fatally shot in February, announce the filing of a $20-million legal claim Thursday.

Garza led deputies on a 35-minute chase from Highway 62 to Interstate 10, with him jumping out of his truck and fleeing on foot, near the Whitewater Cutoff, according to witness video. The video shows four deputies running after Garza along the I-10 in Palm Springs, with Garza facing the deputies several times while holding an object in his hands.

Garza took off again before falling to the ground as deputies fired at him, according to the video.

Garza's attorneys have also filed wrongful-death claims against the Riverside County Sheriff's Department and the California Highway Patrol, both of which responded to the pursuit, alleging they failed to de-escalate the situation and ignored their training when Garza was killed on the side of the freeway.

San Bernardino County sheriff's officials declined to comment, citing open litigation.

The Riverside County Sheriff's Department is investigating the shooting since it happened in its county.

An independent autopsy report showed Garza was shot a dozen times, Olney said. The autopsy showed that Garza was shot twice in the back, and at least twice when he was already on the ground.

"The killing of Tony Garza was a heinous and cowardly act," Olney said. "They did everything wrong."

Family members said Garza's death has left them looking for answers.

"I am heartbroken, devastated and a piece of my heart is now missing," said Matilde Garza, who lost her son.

The deadly incident followed what the family said was a continued and failed struggle to get Garza help for his mental health illness.

Garza's mental health began to deteriorate in 2021, according to family. Family members said they reached out to several independent and government organizations looking for assistance, including inquiring about conservatorship of Garza, but they were unsuccessful.

"His mental health continued to decline and he became more paranoid and fearful," said his sister, Silvia Garza-Littman.

Garza failed to see he was struggling, and several of the programs declined to offer assistance because he didn't seek help himself, she said.

On Feb. 5, 2021, relatives called deputies for a welfare check on Garza. He was arrested that day on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon after he allegedly drove toward deputies, Olney said.

Garza was released, Olney said, and found not mentally competent to stand trial. He was ordered by a judge to be held in county jail for a week until he could be entered into a mental health facility.

But what was supposed to be a week turned into five months, with Garza held in the county's general jail population, Olney said. Family members continued to inquire about space at a mental health facility, and the judge held follow-up hearings asking when he could be transferred.

Family members later learned Garza's name had not been put on the 800-person wait list. Instead, he remained in county jail without access to mental help.

Olney said the experience was traumatizing for Garza.

"Imagine how a healthy individual would react, and he was mentally ill," he said.

Garza was released on Jan. 24 — 12 days before he was shot by deputies — and told he needed to find mental health help within 48 hours. When Garza checked into the court-ordered offices, he was told there was a six-month wait list.

"No one would step in to help our brother," Garza-Littman said. "Instead of helping, they only made things worse."

Woman is guilty in killing of officer

By Libor Jany

A woman pleaded guilty Wednesday to her involvement in the killing of an off-duty Los Angeles police officer during an attempted robbery last year.

Haylee Marie Grisham pleaded guilty to a single count of violent crime in aid of racketeering in the January 2022 fatal shooting of Officer Fernando Arroyos, a spokesman for the U.S. attorney's office said. Arroyos was house-hunting with his girlfriend and had stopped to take pictures of a place that was for sale when they were confronted by two would-be robbers.

Arroyos tried to defend himself and his girlfriend, but he was shot during an exchange of gunfire, according to prosecutors.

Grisham, 18 , was not accused of firing the fatal shots. She accompanied co-defendants Jesse Contreras, Ernesto Cisneros and Luis Alfredo de la Rosa Rios as they committed the robbery and murder "to increase and maintain position" within the Florencia 13 gang, according to the federal charges.

Prosecutors allege that the defendants targeted Arroyos after spotting gold chains around his neck.

The crime took place in an alley in the unincorporated Florence-Firestone neighborhood near Watts.

Grisham could face life in prison.

Times staff writer Richard Winton contributed to this report.

Hostage is killed in Roseville

By Nathan Solis and Salvador Hernandez

A deadly shooting on Thursday spurred the lockdown of a park north of Sacramento where dozens of children were at spring break camps.

Over the course of the incident at Mahany Park in Roseville, a gunman took two hostages, killing one and wounding the other, according to authorities. The suspect and a California Highway Patrol officer were also wounded.

About 12:30 p.m., the CHP reported that an officer had been shot, and Roseville police responded, Capt. Kelby Newton said at a news conference.

CHP officers had been at the park trying to serve an arrest warrant on the suspect, but he opened fire, striking a CHP officer, authorities said.

As additional officers arrived, an armed suspect was seen running from the area and then began to shoot toward the officers, Newton said. The gunman briefly took two bystanders hostage.

The hostages were shot by the gunman, Newton said. One died at the scene. The second was taken to a hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

Firefighters at a station in Mahany Park were able to move the wounded CHP officer into the station, where they provided medical care before the officer was taken to a hospital. His condition was not immediately known.

The suspect also sustained gunshot wounds and was transported to a hospital, police said. They did not specify how the suspect was wounded. The man's condition also wasn't yet known.

There were 33 children attending camps at the park. Police said none were near the shooting.

By 3 p.m., police announced on Twitter that the lockdown at the park had been lifted.

Police declined to identify the suspect or provide information about the warrant.

A photographic treat on tap

By Grace Toohey

Perhaps you've heard of the special cityscape vista that's become known as Manhattanhenge or even Bostonhenge, the phenomenon when the sunset falls perfectly between city blocks, drawing onlookers and photographers for a rare glimmering view.

The West Coast version of that occurrence is now gaining in popularity, with Bay Area photographers preparing for the opportunity to capture the "California Henge" or the "San Francisco Henge" this weekend.

The sunrise is expected to perfectly align with the city's street grid beginning Saturday morning, according to San Francisco-area photographers who are hoping the weather will cooperate for some stunning images.

"The San Francisco weather has been so tricky," said Pankaj Bhargava, an amateur photographer who will stake out a spot to try to capture the view for his fifth year in a row.

Based on his tracking, the sunrise will align between California and Gough streets — the buildings perfectly framing the sun — and over the Bay Bridge for only a few moments beginning Saturday through Monday, just before 7 a.m. It's a phenomenon that happens only twice a year, in April and September.

Bhargava said that during his attempts to capture the view, only about half have worked out due to cloudy or rainy weather.

But since his first trip to the spot, he said, the number of photographers staked out for a perfect shot has more than doubled.

He said it has become a bit easier to catch the phenomenon the last few years as the Bay Area's community of photographers has grown and relied on one another, and some apps have improved how they can track the sun's position.

"One shot I really want is somebody crossing the street under the sun," Bhargava said.

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Los Angeles Times

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"Pacific Surfliner Social Media Marketing and Passenger Communications"

On behalf of the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency (LOSSAN), the Orange County Transportation Authority invites proposals from qualified firms to provide website design and development services for the LOSSAN Corridor Pacific Surfliner.

Proposals are due on or before 2:00 p.m., April 27, 2023.

Firms may download the RFP at https://cammnet.octa.net.

Legal Notices

County of Los Angeles
Aging and Disabilities Department (AD)
Invitation for Bids Solicitation No.: AAA-LTCOP-2324 IFB

Release date: Friday, April 7, 2023

Purpose: Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Services
Mandatory Bidders' Conference:
Monday April 17, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. Pacific Time (PT)
Telephone Conference Number: (323) 776-6996
Conference ID Number: 182 988 519 #

Bid Due Date/Time: Friday April 28, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. PT

Visit:
https://www.lacountyad.org/business
Questions:
aaarfp@ad.lacounty.gov
CN995648 Apr 7, 2023

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SUMMONS
(CITACION JUDICIAL)

Case Number (Numero del Caso): 22PSCV01387

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT:
(AVISO AL DEMANDADO):
Michael Johnson, an individual, and DOES 1 through 10

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF:
(LO ESTA DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE):
SGV, LLC, a California limited liability company

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.

You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.

There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web Site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of $10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case.

¡AVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 dias, la corte puede decider en su contra sin escuchar su version. Lea la informacion a continuacion.

Tiene 30 DIAS DE CALENDARIO despues de que le entreguen esta citacion y papeles legales para presenter una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefonica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y mas informacion en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede mas cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentacion, pida al secretario de la corte que le de un formulario de exencion de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podra quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin mas advertencia.

The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y direccion de la corte es):
Superior Court of California, Los Angeles, Pomona Courthouse South
400 Civic Center Plaza
Pomona, CA 91766

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la direccion y el numero de telefono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es):
Michelle Patterson Law
4455 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 112
San Diego, CA 92123
619-630-5282

Date: (Fecha) 10/20/2022

Sherri R. Carter Executive Officer/Clerk of Court Clerk (Secretario)
J. Gonzalez Deputy (Adjunto)

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

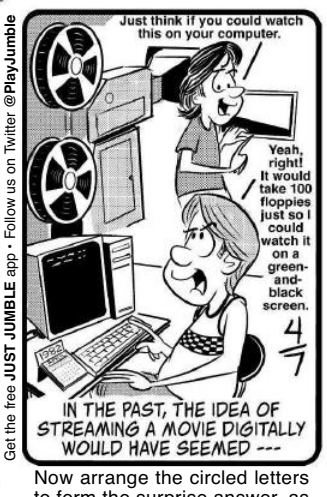
TUAEC

RANBO

PUEPIL

MSIEIL

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble


Just think if you could watch this on your computer.
Yeah, right! It would take 100 floppies just so I could watch it on a green-and-black screen.
4/7
IN THE PAST, THE IDEA OF STREAMING A MOVIE DIGITALLY WOULD HAVE SEEMED ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

- " " -

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: FROZE EIGHT PICNIC ADRIFT
Answer: With $1,000 being the most that could be won on the scratch-off game, it was the — GRAND PRIZE

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Fictitious Business Name Statement NO.: 2023 046159
The following person is doing business as:
Fictitious Business Name(s) Edelman Family Collection 11990 San Vicente Blvd Ste 225, Los Angeles, CA 90049. **Registered Owner** (S): Kate Edelman Johnson 11990 San Vicente Blvd Ste 225, Los Angeles, CA 90049. **Business is conducted by:** an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on **02/2023**. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. (A registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime) **REGISTRANT/CORP/LLC NAME:** Kate Edelman Johnson. **Signature:** Kate Edelman Johnson. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of **Los Angeles** County on 03/01/2023. **NOTICE**- in accordance with subdivision (a)of section 17920 A Fictitious Name Statement generally expires at the end of five years from the date on which it was filed in the office of the County Clerk except, as provided in subdivision (b) of section 17920, where it expires 40 days after any change in the facts set forth in the statement pursuant to section 17913 other than a change in the residence address of a registered owner. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before the expiration. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal state or common law (see section 14411 et seq. Business and Professions code). Dean C. Logan, Los Angeles County Clerk. BY: Tania Ibarra-Ramirez, Deputy. Published 03/17/23, 03/24/23, 03/31/23, 04/07/23.

SUMMONS
(CITACION JUDICIAL)
CASE NUMBER *(Número del Caso)*: 22NWLC24797

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT:
(AVISO AL DEMANDADO):
KEVIN LOPEZ

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF:
(LO ESTÁ DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE):
WELLS FARGO BANK, N.A.

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.
You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center *(www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp)*, your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.
There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can located these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web site *(www.lawhelpcalifornia.org)*, the California Courts Online Self-Help Center *(www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp)*, or by contacting your local court or county bar association. **NOTE**: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of $10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case.
¡AVISO! *Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su version. Lea la información a continuación.*
Tiene 30 DÍAS DE CALENDARIO después de que le entreguen esta citación y papeles legales para presenter una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefónica no lo prolegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puedo encontrar estos formularios de la corte y más información en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede más cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentación, pida al secretario de la corte que le dé un formulario de extención de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podrá quitar su sueldo, dinero y hiener sin más advertencia.
Hay otros requisites legales. Es recommendable que llame a un abogado inmediatamente. Si no conoce a un abogado, puede llamar a un servicio de remission a abogados. Si no puede pagar a un abogado, es posible que cumpla con los requisitos para obtener servicios legales gratuitos de un programa de servicios legales sin lines de lucro. Puede encontrar estos grupos sin lines de lucro en el sitio web de California Legal Services, (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California, (www.sucorte.ca.gov) o poniéndose en contacto con la corte o el colegio de abogados locales. AVISO: Por ley, la corte tiene derecho a reclamar las cuotas y los costos extentos por imponer un gravamen sobre cualquier recuperación de $10,000 ó más de valor recibida mediante un acuerdo o una concesión de arbitraje en un caso de derecho civil. Tiene que pagar el gravamen de la corte antes de que la corte pueda desechar el caso.

The name and address of the court is:
(El nombre y dirección de la corte es):
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
12720 Norwalk Blvd.
NORWALK, CA 90650

The name, address, and telephone number of the plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is:
(El nombre, la dirección y el número del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abodgado, es):
HARLAN M. REESE, ESQ. (CA Bar No.: 118226)
REESE LAW GROUP
3168 Lionhead Avenue
Carlsbad, CA 92010
760/842-5850 (File No. 568438)

DATE *(Fecha)*: 10/17/2022
SHERRI R. CARTER EXECUTIVE OFFICER/CLERK OF COURT, Clerk (Secretario), by A. RANGEL, Deputy (Adjunto) (SEAL)
NOTICE TO THE PERSON SERVED: You are served.
3/24, 3/31, 4/7, 4/14/23

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Fictitious Business Name Statement NO.: 2020 2023075058
The following person is doing business as:
Fictitious Business Name(s) Tomi Cellars 22287 Mulholland Hwy, #309, Calabasas, CA 91302. **Registered Owner** (S): Tomi Cellars, LLC 140 Industrial Way, D1, Buellton, CA 93427. **Business is conducted by:** a Limited Liability Company. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on **12/08/2020**. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. (A registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime) **REGISTRANT/CORP/LLC NAME:** Tomi Cellars, LLC. **Signature:** Boyd Howard Shermis. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of **Los Angeles** County on 04/04/2023. **NOTICE**- in accordance with subdivision (a)of section 17920 A Fictitious Name Statement generally expires at the end of five years from the date on which it was filed in the office of the County Clerk except, as provided in subdivision (b) of section 17920, where it expires 40 days after any change in the facts set forth in the statement pursuant to section 17913 other than a change in the residence address of a registered owner. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before the expiration. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal state or common law (see section 14411 et seq. Business and Professions code). Electronic, Los Angeles County Clerk. BY: Tania Ibarra-Ramirez, Deputy. Published 04/07/23, 04/14/23, 04/21/23, 04/28/23.

IF YOU WERE PAID BY FOOD CASTLE, INC. LOCATED AT 2099 E. 27TH STREET, VERNON, CALIFORNIA 90058 AT ANY TIME BETWEEN JUNE 15, 2017 TO FEBRUARY 15, 2023 YOU COULD RECEIVE A CASH PAYMENT FROM A CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT
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Phoenix Settlement Administrators P.O. Box 7208 Orange, CA 92863
Telephone: (800) 523-5773 Facsimile: (949) 209-2503
Email: notice@phoenixclassaction.com

LEGAL NOTICE
SUMMONS

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF THE STATE OF IDAHO, IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF BENEWAH
Case No. CV05-22-0053

Plaintiffs
MOSES MOUNTAIN, INC. an Idaho Corporation, and EAGLES NETWORK, INC., a Missouri Non-Profit Corporation

vs.

Defendants
THE HEIRS AND DEVISEES OF THE ESTATE OF LOLA M. BROWN, deceased; THE HEIRS AND DEVISEES OF THE ESTATE OF DOROTHY E. FLOCK, deceased; and ALL THOSE CLAIMING AN INTEREST IN AND TO THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER AND THE SOUTH HALF OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER LYING NORTHERLY AND EASTERLY OF THE COUNTY ROAD, IN SECTION 27, TOWNSHIP 44 NORTH, RANGE 4 WEST, BOISE MERIDIAN, BENEWAH COUNTY, IDAHO

To: THE HEIRS AND DEVISEES OF THE ESTATE OF LOLA M. BROWN, deceased; THE HEIRS AND DEVISEES OF THE ESTATE OF DOROTHY E. FLOCK, deceased; and ALL THOSE CLAIMING AN INTEREST IN AND TO THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER AND THE SOUTH HALF OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER LYING NORTHERLY AND EASTERLY OF THE COUNTY ROAD, IN SECTION 27, TOWNSHIP 44 NORTH, RANGE 4 WEST, BOISE MERIDIAN, BENEWAH COUNTY, IDAHO.

You have been sued by MOSES MOUNTAIN, INC. AND EAGLES NETWORK, INC., the Plaintiffs, in the District Court in and for Benewah County, Idaho, Case No. CV05-22-0053.

The nature of the claims against you are for quiet title and declaratory relief that Plaintiffs are the owners of the parcels of real property with the following legal descriptions:

Parcel 1:

That portion of the Northeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter and the Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 27, Township 44 North, Range 4 West, Boise Meridian, Benewah County, Idaho, lying North and East of Old Sanders Road a County road as it currently exists and South of the centerline of McCoy Pit Road a County road as it currently exists. AND that portion of the Southwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 27, Township 44 North, Range 4 West, Boise Meridian, Benewah County, Idaho, lying North and East of Old Sanders Road a County Road as it currently exists.

Parcel 2:

That portion of the Northeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter and the Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 27, Township 44 North, Range 4 West, Boise Meridian, Benewah County, Idaho, lying North of the centerline of McCoy Pit Road a County road as it currently exists.

Any time after 21 days following the last publication of this summons, the court may enter a judgment against you without further notice, unless prior to that time you have filed a written response in the proper form, including the Case No., and paid any required filing fee to the Clerk of the Court by mail or physically at 701 College Ave, St Maries, ID 83861 with the Clerk of the Court, (208) 245-3241 and served a copy of your response on the Plaintiffs' attorney, Daniel M. Keyes, at 1626 Lincoln Way, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814, (208) 667-0683.

A copy of the Summons and Complaint can be obtained by contacting either the Clerk of the Court or the attorney for Plaintiffs. If you wish legal assistance, you should immediately retain an attorney to advise you in this matter.

DANIEL M. KEYES, ISB #9492
JAMES, VERNON & WEEKS, P.A.
1626 Lincoln Way
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
Telephone: (208) 667-0683
Fax: (208) 664-1684
E-mail: dkeyes@jvwlaw.net
Service E-mail: christine@jvwlaw.net
Attorneys for Plaintiffs Moses Mountain, Inc. And Eagles Network, Inc.

DATED January 31, 2023

CLERK OF THE DISTRICT COURT
DEANNA BRAMBLETT

By Sheena Weaver, Deputy Clerk

Published in the Los Angeles Times 3/24/2023, 3/31/2023, 4/7/2023, 4/14/2023

SUMMONS
(CITACION JUDICIAL)

Case Number (Numero del Caso): 22STCV10204

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT:
(AVISO AL DEMANDADO):
ERIC CHAMCHOUM, an individual; MANUELA S. CHAMCHOUM, an individual; BETTY WYMAN, an individual; and DOES 1 through 40, inclusive,

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF:
(LO ESTA DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE):
RAYMOND SAVISS and HELEN SAVISS, individually and as Trustees of the Saviss Family Trust,

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.

You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.

There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web Site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of $10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case.

¡AVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 dias, la corte puede decider en su contra sin escuchar su version. Lea la informacion a continuacion.

Tiene 30 DIAS DE CALENDARIO despues de que le entreguen esta citacion y papeles legales para presenter una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefonica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y mas informacion en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede mas cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentacion, pida al secretario de la corte que le de un formulario de exencion de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podra quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin mas advertencia.

The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y direccion de la corte es):
Stanley Mosk Courthouse
111 North Hill Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la direccion y el numero de telefono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es):
Steven A. Blum (SBN 133208) Blum Collins & Ho, LLP
707 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 4880
Los Angeles, CA 90017
213-572-0400

Date: (Fecha) 4-13-2022

Sherri R. Carter Clerk (Secretario)
V. Delgadillo Deputy (Adjunto)

SUMMONS
(CITACION JUDICIAL)
CASE NUMBER *(Número del Caso)*:
22CHLC04310
NOTICE TO DEFENDANT *(AVISO AL DEMANDADO)*:
CLAUDIA P ULLOA,
YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF *(LO ESTÁ DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE)*: WELLS FARGO BANK, N.A.
NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.
You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (*www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp*), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.
There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web site (*www.lawhelpcalifornia.org*), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (*www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp*), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. **NOTE:** The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of $10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case.
¡AVISO! *Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su versión. Lea la información a continuación.*
Tiene 30 DÍAS DE CALENDARIO después de que le entreguen esta citación y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefónica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y más información en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede más cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentación, pida al secretario de la corte que le dé un formulario de exención de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podrá quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin más advertencia.
Hay otros requisitos legales. Es recomendable que llame a un abogado inmediatamente. Si no conoce a un abogado, puede llamar a un servicio de remisión a abogados. Si no puede pagar a un abogado, es posible que cumpla con los requisitos para obtener servicios legales gratuitos de un programa de servicios legales sin fines de lucro. Puede encontrar estos grupos sin fines de lucro en el sitio web de California Legal Services, (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California, (www.sucorte.ca.gov) o poniéndose en contacto con la corte o el colegio de abogados locales. AVISO: Por ley, la corte tiene derecho a reclamar las cuotas y los costos exentos por imponer un gravamen sobre cualquier recuperación de $10,000 ó más de valor recibida mediante un acuerdo o una concesión de arbitraje en un caso de derecho civil. Tiene que pagar el gravamen de la corte antes de que la corte pueda desechar el caso.
The name and address of the court is *(El nombre y dirección de la corte es)*: SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, 9425 Penfield Avenue, Chatsworth, CA 91311
The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is *(El nombre, la dirección y el número de teléfono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es)*: CLAUDIA GAVRILESCU, ESQ. (CA BAR NO.: 333030), ***REESE LAW GROUP***, 3168 Lionshead Avenue, Carlsbad, CA 92010; 760/842-5850 (File No. 566744)
DATE *(Fecha)*: 02/25/2022
SHERRI R. CARTER EXECUTIVE OFFICER / CLERK OF COURT, Clerk *(Secretario)*, by J. KHATRI, Deputy *(Adjunto)*
(SEAL)
3/17, 3/24, 3/31, 4/7/23

CNS-3680783#

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Los Angeles Times

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Los Angeles Times

Suit alleges alarming conditions

[**Donda,** from B1]
because I was asked to go, and I got there and I saw a need."

Hailey said students were not exposed to anything antisemitic or politically charged in the curriculum but noted that there were restrictions placed on what could be covered in classrooms.

"They definitely wanted to suppress a lot of information in reference to history," Hailey said. "They didn't want the kids to know really about African American history or Asian American history."

The Holocaust was also omitted from Donda Academy curriculum.

On at least three occasions, Hailey said, she voiced concerns to the principal, identified in the complaint as Moira Love, that the school was not complying with health and safety or educational regulations.

Hailey also attempted to discuss her concerns with West but "was threatened not to reach out to him."

Byers also complained to Love about the the school's conditions.

Teachers at the school were not required to have first-aid or mandated child-abuse reporter training, and state regulations regarding educational services and individualized learning plans were not being followed, the complaint says.

The school did not have janitorial services, with West barring the use of cleaning products with chemicals, or proper trash cans, according to the complaint. Teachers were allowed to clean only with "acid water and microfiber cloths."

The school also lacked a school nurse and medical supplies, and medications were stored improperly.

One student's EpiPen to treat allergic reactions was stowed above a microwave, the plaintiffs allege.

The school also allegedly failed to implement protocols related to bullying.

"In one incident, a student assaulted an eighth-grade student by slapping her, then attempted to assault another teacher," the plaintiffs' attorneys wrote in the complaint.

The student "went without discipline."

As for nutrition, Donda Academy students were fed sushi — and only sushi — every school day and were made to eat lunch on the floor, as the school did not have tables, the plaintiffs alleged.

"Students were not allowed to bring any outside food or anything other than water," attorneys wrote in the complaint.

Although the plaintiffs described the day-to-day operations of the school as lacking structure, West demanded that certain rules be strictly enforced.

He required students to dress entirely in black, and they were restricted to the first floor of the building because, the complaint alleges, West is afraid of stairs.

Students were not allowed to use utensils, and neither students nor staff could wear jewelry, according to the complaint.

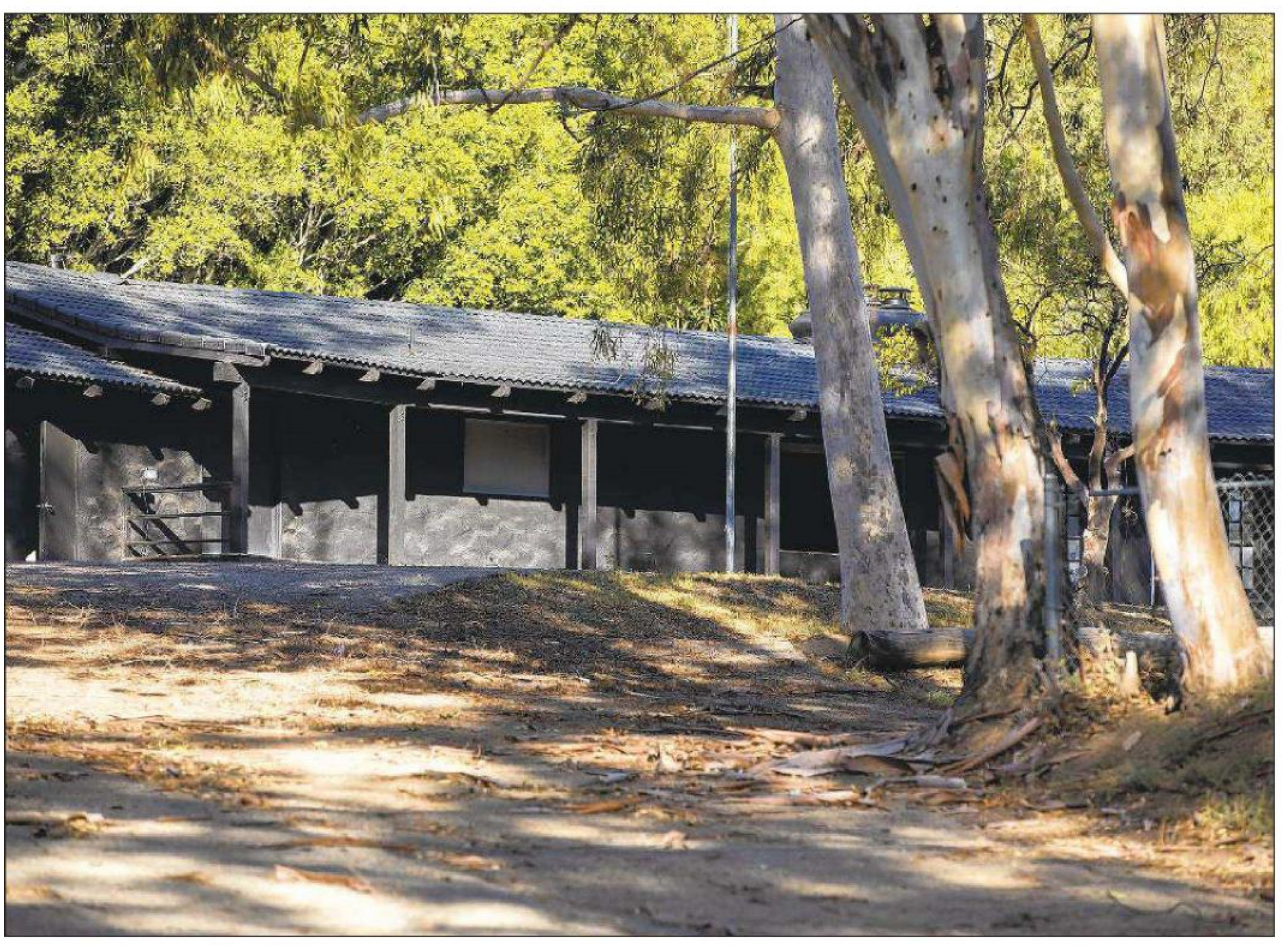
After Hailey and Byers lodged their concerns, no action was taken by school administrators. Love allegedly told Hailey and Byers they were "aggressive." The pair were also shorted up to $2,700 per paycheck, they allege.

Last month, as the two teachers arrived for work, they were met in the parking lot and told that they had been terminated.

Hailey said she believes there are others working at the school who are afraid to speak out about the conditions.

"They are afraid to speak up because they are afraid of being fired or ostracized" or losing out on money, Hailey said. "But that is not what we get in this business for. We get in this business, if we get into it properly, to educate kids."

> 'They didn't want the kids to know really about African American history or Asian American history.'
>
> — Cecilia Hailey, one of two former teachers at Donda Academy who are suing Kanye West



Mel Melcon Los Angeles Times

DONDA ACADEMY, named for Kanye West's mother, operated in Simi Valley, above, before relocating to Chatsworth. Two fired teachers allege the school did not comply with health, safety or educational regulations.

State's population trends resettling

[**Population,** from B1]
Demographic experts say the census data reflect movements of the population during the period when COVID-19 was still a major concern, and they point out that it is possible that the population losses have slowed and urban centers could soon see their populations rebound when the numbers for 2022-23 are released.

In the 2020-21 census data, urban counties such as Los Angeles and San Francisco showed the biggest percentage losses. But the population loss tapered off the following year in those urban counties in comparison to rural counties.

The "waning of the worst days of the pandemic has slowed the exit from major cities" as fear of living in crowded communities has decreased and in-office workers have become more common, said Paul Ong, director of the Center for Neighborhood Knowledge at UCLA.

The cities have "once again become appealing to a new generation of young workers," he said, though they still have major issues to address.

Housing, homelessness, infrastructure and safety issues have been "exposed and exacerbated" by the pandemic, and "without correcting these flaws, major cities will continue to depopulate," Ong said.

Moving out

Here are the 10 counties in California with the highest rate of population loss between July 2021 and July 2022.

- Lassen: -6%
- Alpine: -3.64%
- Plumas: -2.95%
- Sierra: -2.36%
- Mono: -2.13%
- Trinity: -1.74%

Population change in California by county

The biggest population drops and gains were in rural counties between July 2021 and July 2022.

Change in county population from July 2021 to July 2022

6% decrease — No change — increase of 6%

U.S. Census Bureau

Terry Castleman Los Angeles Times

- Del Norte: -1.71%
- Napa: -1.40%
- Mendocino: -1.34%
- San Mateo: -1.34%

In Lassen County, Supervisor Jason Ingram attributes much of the recent population loss to the closure of the California Correctional Center in Susanville.

"A big percentage of that would be inmates," who have largely been "cleared out" as the prison closes, he said.

Employees of the prison may also be leaving as jobs dry up, contributing to population decrease. "We lost some corrections officers to other states," Ingram said.

Moving in

On the other end of the spectrum, some of the counties that lost many people in 2020-21 rebounded the following year.

Yolo County was the standout. After losing 1.5% of its population in 2020 — ranking 10th-most in the state — the county topped the list in growth in 2021-22.

Notably, Santa Cruz and Santa Barbara counties flipped from losing among the most people — second- and fourth-most, respectively — to showing top 10 percentage population gains.

"Many counties with large universities saw their populations fully rebound this year as students returned," Christine Hartley, assistant division chief for estimates and projections in the U.S. Census Bureau's population division, said of the census results. Santa Cruz and Santa Barbara have major college campuses.

Riverside, Madera, Placer, Yuba and San Benito counties all continued to grow, showing top 10 percentage population gains in both years.

Here are the 10 counties in California that gained the most population between July 2021 and July 2022.

- Yolo: +4.26%
- Merced: +1.95%
- Santa Cruz: +1.49%
- Santa Barbara: +1.46%
- San Benito: +1.36%
- Yuba: +1.31%
- Placer: +1.20%
- San Luis Obispo: +0.97%
- Madera: +0.85%
- Riverside: +0.84%

Angel Barajas, a Yolo County supervisor, pointed to several areas of growth, including the south side of Woodland, where developers are "adding a couple of thousand units."

Woodland, one of four incorporated cities in the county, is "attracting people from the Bay Area and also the Sacramento region," he said.

Housing in the county is "affordable in comparison to Bay Area rates," Barajas said, and people can live there and either commute or telecommute to Bay Area jobs.

"It's a beautiful county, to be quite honest," he said.

The county also is home to UC Davis, perhaps accounting for some of the growth.

Overall, California's population loss slowed considerably from the first year of the data set to the second. In 2020-21, the state lost 0.91% of its population. The following year, it lost just 0.29%.

OBITUARY NOTICES

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Los Angeles Times

MILLER, Judith

April 10, 1933 - March 28, 2023

Judith Miller of Los Angeles died on March 28 from complications of Parkinson's disease. She was 89. A homemaker and philanthropist, Judy was a strong supporter of all things Jewish — from the kugel, matzo ball soup and chopped liver she cooked in her kitchen, to the organizations in L.A. and Israel that she endowed alongside her late husband, Louis G. Miller.

For Judy's eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren, she was simply "Bubbie." A loving matriarch who hosted Thanksgiving, Passover and all the other Jewish holidays with apparent ease, Judy wielded a radiant smile and possessed old-school grace.

Born in Patterson, N.J., to Celia and Morris Pellow on April 10, 1933, Judy was the middle of three kids in a home where Yiddish was spoken by her Lithuanian mother and father, the latter of whom was a house painter.

Judy was a product of the Depression, and her family felt its effects. The Pellows moved to Santa Monica in 1939 with an eye toward better prospects: Judy's dad had a job waiting for him at one of his brother's local grocery stores. The Pellow family moved into a Spanish bungalow on Bay Street, one with a big yard featuring loquat, peach, apricot and avocado trees. Try finding that in Jersey.

"It was exciting for a kid to come to California, especially in the wintertime," she said in a 2020 interview. "It was a whole new sunshine-y atmosphere."

At Santa Monica High School, Judy met her Louis, a transplant from Hartford, Conn., who was a standout on Samohi's baseball team. They made a good-looking couple. They married in 1951; a year later, their son Larry was born. Philip came next, then Caryn.

"I love my kids and did my best for them," Judy said. "That was my job."

The Millers raised their kids in Beverlywood before moving to a house on North Rexford Drive in Beverly Hills in the early 1970s. That sprawling home, where Judy and Lou lived for the better part of five decades, became a kind of family headquarters. Multiple generations regularly gathered there for a swim or Shabbat dinner.

"I love to entertain and Lou loves to have parties," Judy said.

As Lou pursued ventures including car dealerships — he eventually owned several housed at a complex called Culver City Import Group — Judy was always by his side, indispensable to his entrepreneurship. Lou was known for a gruff exterior — dinner-table political arguments were a favorite pastime — but Judy could rein in her husband. She'd flash him a look and give him a "Louie!" That'd bring him in line. Most of the time.

In 1986, Judy and Lou founded and endowed the Miller Introduction to Judaism Program at the American Jewish University. Now the largest initiative welcoming newcomers to Judaism in North America, it has taught more than 15,000 students, with more than 5,000 choosing to become Jewish. They also sponsored several TALI schools in Israel through the Schechter Institutes. Among her many philanthropic pursuits, Judy twice served as president of University Women, a fundraising group at the University of Judaism, now the AJU.

Lou died in 2021, also at the age of 89 and also in the early days of spring. Judy and Lou had been married 69 years, and a life without her soulmate was a diminished one. And Judy was honest about that. Still, visits from her family — especially the grandkids and great-grandkids — reliably brought a smile to her face. Judy was also predeceased by her parents and sister Rachel, who went by "Ruckie."

Judy and Lou were avid travelers, first visiting Israel in 1969 and touring across the Middle East, Europe and Asia. In recent decades, they took their extended family on annual vacations — in most years to Hawaii.

On a trip to the Big Island in 2014, Judy, then in her 80s, flashed some of her charm — and optimism — at a time when others might not have been so cheery. One night, she sat down for dinner at a restaurant with about 20 of her clan, and announced that she'd seen a local doctor over a malady that'd proven stubborn. Still, when a waiter came by to take cocktail orders, Judy didn't miss a beat, asking for her go-to drink: Belvedere on the rocks with a big orange wedge. Some of her brood gave her a look. Was a drink wise, given her condition?

Judy wasn't a big drinker, but she relished cocktail hour on vacation with her family. So, the under-the-weather great-grandmother explained with a smile that it was fine for her to drink alcohol. After all, she noted wryly, she wasn't starting antibiotics until the next day.

Oh, Judy, how we will miss you!

Funeral services were held at Hillside Memorial Park on March 30. Judy is survived by her brother Danny Pellow and his wife, Penny; her son Larry Miller and his wife, Adrian; her son Philip Miller and his wife, Judith; her daughter Caryn Katz and her husband, Jerry; as well as all those lucky grandkids and great-grandkids.

ESCANDON, Jonathan Henry

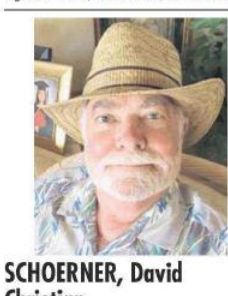
Jonathan Escandon

Was a motorcycle and car enthusiast. He passed on Sunday 03/12/23. Son to Ruben and Dolores Escandon. Siblings Ruben jr and Rubina escandon. He leaves behind his beloved daughter Kendra Escandon.

MAGASINN, Rhonda Wolf

September 27, 1966 - March 31, 2023

Rhonda (Wolf) Magasinn died suddenly on March 31, 2023. Rhonda was born in Encino, California on September 27, 1966, to Edward and Sylvia Wolf. She was raised in Northridge, California. She received a BA in Psychology at CSUN followed by an MA in Psychology from Pepperdine University before dedicating herself to the welfare of abused children as an employee of the Los Angeles County Department of Child and Family Services, spending almost all of her time taking calls on the Child Abuse Hotline. Rhonda married Michael L. Magasinn on March 4, 2000, and together they were privileged to raise two wonderful sons, AJ and Matt. Rhonda was a loving mother, a beloved wife and a cherished friend. Funeral service will be officiated by Rabbi Ron Li-Paz of Valley Outreach Synagogue at Hillside Memorial Park, Los Angeles, at 10:00 AM on Friday, April 7. In lieu of flowers, donations in Rhonda's memory can be made to the Valley Outreach Synagogue Charitable Fund, for the benefit of Valley Outreach Synagogue, currently located at 26668 Agoura Road, Calabasas, CA 91302.



SCHOERNER, David Christian

September 24, 1942 - February 17, 2023

David Christian Schoerner (born September 24, 1942) died Friday, February 17, at Torrance Memorial Medical Center in Torrance, California. As kind and gentle a man as you will ever find, Dave passed away in the loving embrace of his family. He is survived by his wife Marguerite Doumak, daughter Katherine Schoerner, sons Jeff and Morgan Schoerner, grandson Max Schoerner, and brothers Edward and Paul Schoerner, in addition to extended family and friends throughout California and beyond. While we are heartbroken at our loss, we are also deeply appreciative of the gift of his presence in our lives. We can still hear you laughing, Dave.

SHAKELY, Carole Ferguson

January 6, 1942 - March 30, 2023

Carole passed away peacefully on March 30, 2023. She is survived by her husband Jim, her son Benton, his wife Katie, and her grandchildren Connor and Mason. She was an unforgettable wife, parent, teacher and friend. Her exuberant spirit, as it always has, roams the wild world and beyond. Donations in her memory can be made to Homeboy Industries.

SULLIVAN, James M.

James M. Sullivan, former U.S. Air Force Sergeant, passed away January 31st, 2023 of natural causes at the age of 73. He is survived by his wife, brother, and sister.

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Los Angeles Times

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THE WEATHER

Today in Southern California

Mostly sunny: A front moving inland to the north will bring a cooler onshore flow at the coast today through Saturday. That flow will also allow morning low clouds, most widespread Saturday morning. The weekend will end with dry weather and rising temperatures. Interior areas Sunday and Monday will have the warmest weather so far this year, while coastal areas stay cooler.

5-day forecasts

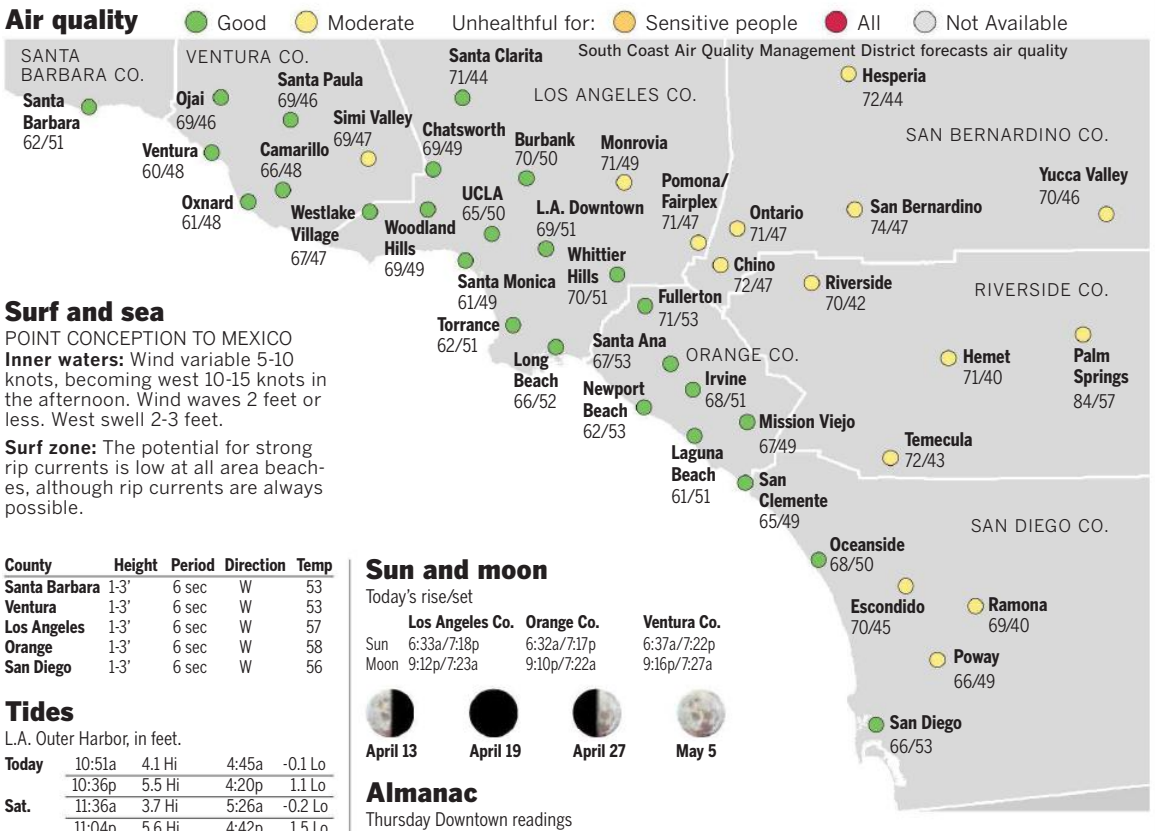
High/low temperatures are average forecasts for entire zone.

	L.A. Basin		Valleys		Beaches		Mountains		Deserts	
Today	69|51		69|49		61|49		52|31		84|57	
	Mostly sunny		Mostly sunny		Partly sunny		Cool with sun		Sunny	
Saturday	Partly sunny	69/52	Partly sunny	71/53	Partly sunny	63/52	Partly sunny	55/33	Mostly sunny	86/62
Sunday	Sunny	73/55	Sunny	79/57	Sunny	65/52	Sunny	59/35	Mostly sunny	92/68
Monday	Mostly sunny	77/54	Mostly sunny	81/58	Partly sunny	64/53	Sunny	63/39	Hot	97/67
Tuesday	Partly sunny	72/54	Some sun	76/53	Partly sunny	63/54	Partly sunny	64/37	Hot	96/65

Air quality

Good · Moderate · Unhealthful for: Sensitive people · All · Not Available

South Coast Air Quality Management District forecasts air quality



Surf and sea

POINT CONCEPTION TO MEXICO

Inner waters: Wind variable 5-10 knots, becoming west 10-15 knots in the afternoon. Wind waves 2 feet or less. West swell 2-3 feet.

Surf zone: The potential for strong rip currents is low at all area beaches, although rip currents are always possible.

County	Height	Period	Direction	Temp
Santa Barbara	1-3'	6 sec	W	53
Ventura	1-3'	6 sec	W	53
Los Angeles	1-3'	6 sec	W	57
Orange	1-3'	6 sec	W	58
San Diego	1-3'	6 sec	W	56

Tides

L.A. Outer Harbor, in feet.

Today	10:51a	4.1 Hi	4:45a	-0.1 Lo
	10:36p	5.5 Hi	4:20p	1.1 Lo
Sat.	11:36a	3.7 Hi	5:26a	-0.2 Lo
	11:04p	5.6 Hi	4:42p	1.5 Lo

UV index

Minutes to burn for sensitive people

Las Vegas, 25 · Phoenix, 25
Los Angeles, 25 · San Francisco, 60

Sun and moon

Today's rise/set

	Los Angeles Co.	Orange Co.	Ventura Co.
Sun	6:33a/7:18p	6:32a/7:17p	6:37a/7:22p
Moon	9:12p/7:23a	9:10p/7:22a	9:16p/7:27a

April 13 · April 19 · April 27 · May 5

Almanac

Thursday Downtown readings

Temperature	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura
High/low	73/52	81/47	68/47
Normal high/low	72/54	73/53	67/47
High/low a year ago	88/57	89/56	77/56
Record high/date	106/1989	89/2022	100/1989
Record low/date	40/1801	46/2006	40/1964

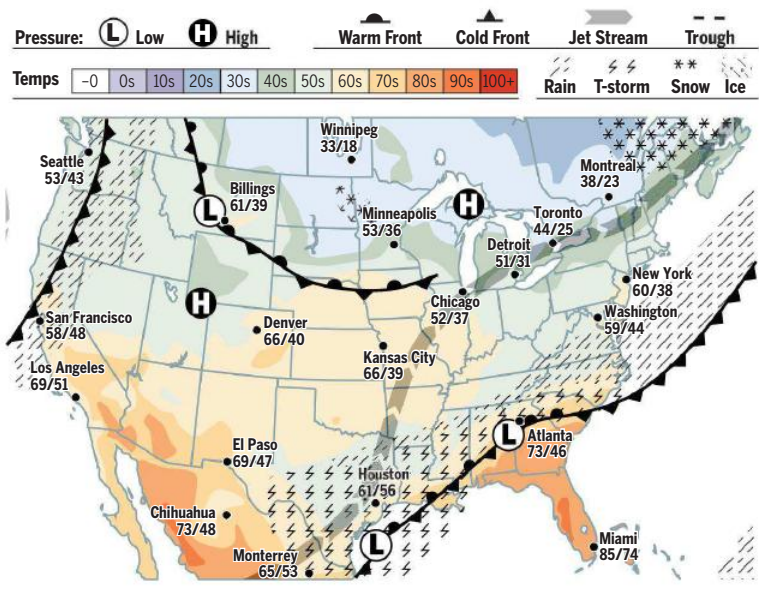
Precipitation	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura
24-hour total (as of 5 p.m.)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Season total (since Oct. 1)	27.42	20.53	25.42
Last season (Oct. 1 to date)	11.83	6.30	11.04
Season norm (Oct. 1 to date)	13.24	10.88	14.95
Humidity (high/low)	50/15	63/13	82/23

California cities

City	Thursday Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Saturday Hi	Lo
Anaheim	82	49	--	70	50	70	50
Avalon/Catalina	65	51	--	58	48	60	50
Bakersfield	72	39	--	71	52	69	51
Barstow	67	33	--	78	52	78	54
Big Bear Lake	51	21	--	52	31	55	33
Bishop	64	23	--	65	35	69	39
Burbank	73	46	--	70	50	69	50
Camarillo	75	41	--	66	48	67	48
Chatsworth	76	44	--	69	49	71	51
Chino	76	39	--	72	47	72	49
Compton	74	43	--	68	51	68	53
Dana Point	67	44	--	62	51	64	51
Death Valley	80	46	--	84	68	86	69
Del Mar	67	45	--	59	51	59	54
Escondido	76	43	--	70	45	72	46
Eureka	56	46	.07	55	42	55	43
Fallbrook	74	49	--	70	44	71	48
Fresno	71	41	--	69	49	72	49
Fullerton	81	47	--	71	53	71	53
Hemet	72	36	--	71	40	70	46
Hesperia	xx	xx	xx	72	44	74	44
Huntington Beach	71	43	--	62	52	63	53
Idyllwild	59	39	--	57	41	60	46
Irvine	69	41	--	68	51	68	52
L.A. D'ntown/USC	73	52	--	69	51	69	52
L.A. Int'l. Airport	70	49	--	64	51	63	53
Laguna Beach	71	40	--	61	51	62	55
Lancaster	67	29	--	72	47	73	42
Long Beach	79	51	--	66	52	67	53
Mammoth Lakes	37	3	--	46	26	52	30
Mission Viejo	75	46	--	67	49	68	51
Monrovia	73	48	--	71	49	71	52
Monterey	61	40	--	62	51	63	45
Mt. Wilson	56	34	--	44	41	47	45
Needles	75	50	--	81	55	87	58
Newport Beach	xx	xx	xx	62	53	64	55
Northridge	75	45	--	70	49	70	52
Oakland	61	43	--	59	46	63	44
Oceanside	73	41	--	68	50	68	52
Ojai	75	36	--	69	46	68	48
Ontario	74	40	--	71	47	71	49
Palm Springs	80	52	--	82	57	86	62
Pasadena	75	48	--	69	50	71	52
Paso Robles	70	34	--	64	47	72	43
Redding	59	47	.03	56	51	64	45
Riverside	71	38	--	70	42	71	45
Sacramento	65	39	--	61	44	67	44
San Bernardino	73	41	--	74	47	75	52
San Diego	71	46	--	66	53	66	55
San Francisco	61	47	--	58	48	63	48
San Gabriel	xx	xx	xx	71	51	71	53
San Jose	69	42	--	61	48	68	45
San Luis Obispo	69	40	--	63	50	66	50
Santa Ana	73	50	--	67	53	69	54
Santa Barbara	70	42	--	62	51	63	50
Santa Clarita	69	40	--	71	44	71	50
Santa Monica Pier	69	49	--	61	49	63	52
Santa Paula	75	41	--	69	46	69	50
Santa Rosa	61	39	--	61	37	63	39
Simi Valley	75	53	--	69	47	69	48
Tahoe Valley	48	16	--	43	30	51	30
Temecula	76	43	--	72	43	74	47
Thousand Oaks	75	51	--	68	47	69	48
Torrance	73	45	--	62	51	64	53
UCLA	xx	xx	xx	65	50	64	52
Van Nuys	77	47	--	71	51	71	53
Ventura	68	47	--	60	48	61	48
Whittier Hills	75	47	--	70	51	70	51
Woodland Hills	78	39	--	69	49	70	52
Wrightwood	48	27	--	56	42	57	42
Yorba Linda	79	47	--	69	48	70	50
Yosemite Valley	60	29	--	51	34	60	35

Today in North America

Heavy rain: Heavy rain and embedded thunderstorms will line a front from the mid-Atlantic to Texas, bringing the risk of flooding. Warm air will remain in Florida. A front will bring showers from Washington to Central California.



U.S. cities

THURSDAY'S EXTREMES FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES

High 93 in Plant City, Fla. **Low** –19 in Yellowstone N.P., Wyo.

City	Thursday Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Sky
Albany	65	47	.31	48	28	W
Albuquerque	64	31	--	66	44	Su
Anchorage	34	23	Tr	35	20	Pc
Aspen	39	6	Tr	54	29	Su
Atlanta	83	69	.05	73	46	Ts
Austin	52	47	1.92	54	51	Ts
Baltimore	87	62	.24	59	42	Cy
Boise	56	35	--	49	35	Sh
Boston	47	39	.01	57	33	W
Buffalo	46	43	.18	43	27	Pc
Burlington, Vt.	66	46	Tr	43	26	Pc
Charleston, S.C.	86	68	--	83	53	Ts
Charlotte	84	67	.13	65	44	R
Chicago	52	32	--	52	37	Su
Cincinnati	50	43	.03	58	37	Pc
Cleveland	53	46	.06	46	30	Su
Columbia, S.C.	86	69	.05	76	47	Ts
Columbus	53	46	.09	57	32	Pc
Dallas/Ft.Worth	59	49	--	58	49	Sh
Denver	51	21	--	66	40	Su
Detroit	53	38	Tr	51	31	Su
El Paso	73	42	--	69	47	Pc
Eugene	58	46	.22	57	38	R
Fort Myers	93	71	.12	90	68	Pc
Hartford	69	39	Tr	55	32	Pc
Honolulu	85	74	Tr	83	73	Cy
Houston	64	55	1.12	61	56	Ts
Indianapolis	52	39	--	57	36	Pc
Jacksonville, Fla.	87	70	--	85	67	Sh
Kansas City	59	27	--	66	39	Su
Knoxville	79	62	.04	55	47	R
Las Vegas	65	43	--	74	56	Su
Louisville	52	47	Tr	61	43	Pc
Medford	60	44	.04	58	35	Cy
Memphis	51	49	2.20	60	50	Pc
Miami	87	77	Tr	85	74	Pc
Milwaukee	54	33	--	42	35	Su
Minneapolis	38	22	Tr	53	36	Pc
Nashville	53	51	2.36	58	48	Pc
New Orleans	85	73	.02	79	68	Ts
New York	80	46	Tr	60	38	Pc
Norfolk	85	68	--	56	49	R
Oklahoma City	62	41	--	66	43	Pc
Omaha	59	21	.01	68	41	Su
Orlando	90	70	--	89	65	Pc
Philadelphia	83	55	.24	60	40	Pc
Phoenix	79	50	--	84	57	Su
Pittsburgh	55	50	.06	52	29	Pc
Portland, Ore.	51	46	.56	57	43	R
Providence	55	40	.06	59	33	Pc
Raleigh/Durham	87	70	--	59	44	R
Reno	65	31	--	54	37	Pc
Richmond	87	64	.37	53	44	R
St. Louis	54	39	--	62	41	Pc
Salt Lake City	49	27	--	55	40	Pc
Seattle	53	44	.38	53	43	R
Tampa	92	73	--	88	71	Pc
Tucson	81	40	--	84	52	Su
Tulsa	62	36	--	70	42	Pc
Washington, D.C.	86	65	.11	59	44	Cy
Wichita	62	34	--	66	37	Su

World

City	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Hi	Lo	Sky
Acapulco	89	70	--	87	69	Su
Amsterdam	48	37	1.07	50	42	Cy
Athens	61	48	.09	61	47	Su
Bangkok	100	82	.05	98	83	Ts
Barcelona	61	48	--	65	51	Su
Berlin	52	30	--	45	41	Cy
Cabo San Lucas	81	54	--	82	64	Su
Cairo	79	58	--	93	62	Su
Dubai	85	68	--	87	72	Su
Dublin	55	43	.10	55	39	Pc
Havana	91	72	.01	90	65	Su
Ho Chi Minh City	95	78	--	95	79	Pc
Hong Kong	83	75	.20	75	67	Cy
Istanbul	57	46	.26	54	42	Pc
Jerusalem	64	47	--	79	54	Su
Johannesburg	73	49	--	78	58	Su
Kuala Lumpur	90	76	.67	91	74	Ts
Lima	82	73	--	83	74	Pc
London	57	48	.10	59	38	Pc
Madrid	75	39	--	77	41	Su
Mecca	96	73	.05	95	78	Ts
Mexico City	83	56	--	82	55	R
Montreal	50	32	.08	38	23	Pc
Moscow	55	36	--	49	30	Pc
Mumbai	91	79	--	94	82	Hz
New Delhi	90	68	.01	90	67	Hz
Paris	59	48	.13	57	40	Pc
Prague	47	25	--	46	37	Pc
Rome	57	36	--	61	48	Su
Seoul	50	47	.05	61	32	Su
Singapore	87	77	.04	85	76	Sh
Taipei City	79	71	.20	66	58	R
Tokyo	72	54	.08	70	60	R
Vancouver	52	45	.28	55	44	R
Vienna	50	27	--	47	38	Cy

Key: **Su** sunny; **Pc** partly cloudy; **Cy** cloudy; **Fg** foggy; **Prcp** precipitation; **Dr** drizzle; **Hz** hazy **Sh** showers; **Ts** thunderstorms; **R** rain; **Sn** snow; **Sf** snow flurries; **I** ice; **Rs** rain/snow; **W** windy; **Tr** trace. **Notes:** National extremes exclude Alaska and Hawaii. Missing data indicated by "xx". Thursday's readings as of 5 p.m.

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Low-key Smith on a path to Dodgers stardom

ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

WILL SMITH'S production through four seasons is comparable to Carlton Fisk at a similar career stage.

[**Hernández,** from B10] is now.

How prepared is he for that?

"As prepared as I need to be, I guess," he said. "I don't know."

He smiled.

Oh, so you do smile.

"Yeah," Smith said.

He chuckled.

Good to know. The extraordinary player with the ordinary name isn't completely dead inside. While his low-key personality has made him one of baseball's most overlooked players, Smith won't be able to hide in plain sight for much longer.

Smith, 28, isn't just an offensively inclined catcher anymore. He's about to become a superstar.

To the sport's insiders, he already is, his offensive production through four seasons comparable to that of Carlton Fisk at a similar stage in his career. Last year, Smith batted .260 with 24 homers and 87 runs batted in.

He has remained on his upward trajectory in Year 5, hitting .409 with three homers and 10 RBI in six games. His elevated status should soon turn the Big Two of Mookie Betts and Freddie Freeman into the Big Three.

Manager Dave Roberts placed Smith in another Big Three as he declared, "I think he's one of the three best catchers in baseball."

The others: J.T. Realmuto of the Philadelphia Phillies and Adley Rutschman of the Baltimore Orioles.

"He's a superstar," Roberts said. "It probably makes him uncomfortable, but given his ability to post (in the lineup every day) and work both sides of the baseball, hit in the middle of the order, you don't find guys like that."

Smith opened last season as the team's No. 6 hitter but ended up batting cleanup. The offseason departure of Trea Turner to the Phillies made Smith's continued offensive growth a necessity for these top-heavy Dodgers, as Roberts made Smith his No. 3 hitter behind Betts and Freeman.

Roberts praised not only the power of Smith but also his situational hitting ability, pointing to a run-scoring double he hit into the right-center field gap on a breaking ball by Rockies reliever Pierce Johnson on Tuesday.

Smith's importance to the offense has raised legitimate concerns about his workload, specifically about how much the Dodgers should rest him. Smith caught 108 games last year, 115 the year before that. Roberts held him out for the first time this year during the Dodgers' third game of the season.

"In a vacuum, we can always look at it and say we're better if Will Smith is in the lineup in any capacity," Roberts said.

"I think that as time goes on, as he gets his workload built up, it's gonna be even tougher to not have him in the lineup."

Smith was the Dodgers' designated hitter 25 times last year, but Roberts has less flexibility to use him in that role, as the team now has a full-time DH in recent addition J.D. Martinez.

Julio Urías, who pitched six scoreless innings on Tuesday with Smith behind the plate, praised Smith for his improvement as a catcher.

"He has more experience," Urías said in Spanish. "He knows you better. He knows the other teams better. In difficult innings, he calls for pitches that should be called. I have a lot of confidence in him."

The defensive advancement was entirely expected, considered Smith picked up catching relatively late. An infielder and pitcher in high school, Smith didn't become a catcher until he went to Louisville.

However, Roberts tempered expectations on how much his postgame interviews would improve when it was mentioned that his personality was ...

"Too vanilla?" Roberts asked.

That's one way to put it.

Privately, Roberts was asked, is Smith funny?

"No," he said without any hesitation.

Now, that was funny, the interview room suddenly filled with laughter.

"He's consistent," Roberts said. "He's loyal. He's intelligent. He's a competitor. But certainly not funny."

Roberts smiled.

"I like him just the way he is," Roberts said.

I'm not entirely convinced. I saw Smith smile, I heard him laugh and I have a suspicion there might be more in there.

Pitch clock has challenges

[**Pitch clock,** from B10] walking around the mound a bit. But that isn't a luxury this season. Not with the pitch clock ticking.

"So I called Barnesy out just to take a minute to think about it," Kershaw said.

Barnesy is Kershaw's longtime trusted catcher, Austin Barnes. The filibustering, formally one of the Dodgers' allotted five mound visits for the game, proved effective. Kershaw struck out Lewis and Ketel Marte each with four pitches, finishing both at-bats with curveballs out of the strike zone, to flatten the threat.

"I think your ability to slow games down, knowing what you want to do is important because you have to get going with it," Barnes said as he snapped his fingers. "It's quick. The game's fast and you need to be thinking ahead about this pitch and that pitch."

Kershaw, 35, held the Diamondbacks to one run with nine strikeouts and no walks over six innings in a 10-1 win that lasted 2 hours, 14 minutes. Christian Walker's leadoff home run in the second inning was the lone blip. The third inning was the only time Arizona put a runner in scoring position. Kershaw said it was an example of momentum in the nascent pitch clock era.

"If you're in a good groove, you don't really notice it, but I think there are going to be times where, with the stress of innings and people on base, you gotta make big pitches and you might feel a little rushed," said Kershaw, who believes the pitch clock is a good addition for the sport. "So you just got to use those mound visits when you can."

Earl Weaver famously summarized day-to-day momentum in baseball. "Momentum is only as good as tomorrow's starting pitcher," the adage goes. But momentum has always existed within games. The pitch clock, at least anecdotally, has escalated the possibility for drastic shifts within innings.

HARRY HOW Getty Images

CLAYTON KERSHAW is a fan of the pitch clock but acknowledges it has somewhat changed his approach.

Pitchers now have 15 seconds to begin their motion with the bases empty and 20 seconds with a runner on base. A violation produces an automatic ball. The change has been an unbridled success. Quickening the pace had cut game times through Tuesday by an average of 28 minutes compared to last season. The snappier speed also means the chances of an inning spiraling out of control are higher.

One potential example: The Philadelphia Phillies gave up nine runs in the fourth inning against the Texas Rangers on opening day. After the game, Phillies ace Aaron Nola, who was pulled after surrendering five runs, told reporters the pitch clock remains a challenge. Phillies catcher J.T. Realmuto told the Athletic he was out of breath behind the plate.

"With the pitch clock, you can't ever slow the pitcher down," Realmuto said. "It's crazy. Once an offense gets rolling and the pitcher gets on the ropes a little bit, it's really hard."

The Phillies pitching coach made one mound visit early in the inning. By rule, the pitcher must be removed during the second visit. The pause didn't stymie the Rangers.

In Los Angeles, Walker, the Diamondbacks' slugging first baseman, noted he felt momentum swings more acutely in Arizona's 8-2 loss to the Dodgers to open the season.

"I think, no matter what side of the momentum you're on, harnessing that is going to be a challenge," Walker said. "When you're behind and you feel like you're looking to slow things down, trying to find a way to combat the clock, I think is going to be another challenge."

On Monday, the Dodgers rallied for seven two-out runs in the fifth inning of their 13-4 win over the Colorado Rockies. The onslaught began with Freddie Freeman lining a double against Rockies starter Ryan Feltner. It ended with a groundout from Chris Taylor. In between, the Rockies made three mound visits and a pitching change.

"You can't get a 20-second timeout (whenever you want)," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said.

"So you got to sort of hang in there and bow your neck and keep making pitches so you can't really stop the momentum. It's a lot harder."

That wasn't lost on Kershaw when he called Barnes out Saturday. Working with the pitch clock in a game that mattered for the first time, Kershaw recognized he needed more time to execute pitches in the third inning. It might have been the difference in his outing.

"There's no way to prepare for it," Kershaw said. "Hopefully, you don't have any of those situations, but it's inevitable."

NL STANDINGS

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10
DODGERS	5	2	.714	–	5-2
San Francisco	3	3	.500	1½	3-3
Arizona	3	4	.429	2	3-4
Colorado	3	4	.429	2	3-4
San Diego	3	4	.429	2	3-4
Central	**W**	**L**	**Pct.**	**GB**	**L10**
Milwaukee	5	1	.833	–	5-1
Pittsburgh	4	2	.667	1	4-2
Cincinnati	3	2	.600	1½	3-2
Chicago	2	3	.400	2½	2-3
St. Louis	2	4	.333	3	2-4
East	**W**	**L**	**Pct.**	**GB**	**L10**
Atlanta	6	1	.857	–	6-1
Miami	3	4	.429	3	3-4
New York	3	4	.429	3	3-4
Philadelphia	1	5	.167	4½	1-5
Washington	1	6	.143	5	1-6

Thursday's results
DODGERS 5, at Arizona 2
San Francisco 16, at Chicago White Sox 6
at Colorado 1, Washington 0
at Atlanta 7, San Diego 6
Miami at New York, rain
Cincinnati at Philadelphia, rain

AL STANDINGS

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10
ANGELS	4	2	.667	–	4-2
Texas	4	2	.667	–	4-2
Houston	3	4	.429	1½	3-4
Oakland	2	4	.333	2	2-4
Seattle	2	5	.286	2½	2-5
Central	**W**	**L**	**Pct.**	**GB**	**L10**
Cleveland	5	2	.714	–	5-2
Minnesota	4	2	.667	½	4-2
Chicago	3	4	.429	2	3-4
Detroit	2	5	.286	3	2-5
Kansas City	1	6	.143	4	1-6
East	**W**	**L**	**Pct.**	**GB**	**L10**
Tampa Bay	6	0	1.000	–	6-0
New York	4	2	.667	2	4-2
Toronto	4	3	.571	2½	4-3
Baltimore	3	3	.500	3	3-3
Boston	3	4	.429	3½	3-4

Thursday's results
Boston 6, at Detroit 3
Toronto 6, at Kansas City 3
San Francisco 16, at Chicago 6
New York at Baltimore, rain
Houston at Minnesota, rain

TODAY'S GAMES

NATIONAL LEAGUE >>>

MATCHUP	W-L	ERA	TIME
Dodgers/Kershaw (L)	1-0	1.50	6:30 p.m.
ARI/Bumgarner (L)	0-1	11.25	SNLA
MIA/Cabrera (R)	0-0	4.50	10 a.m.
NY/Megill (R)	1-0	3.60	
CIN/Greene (R)	0-0	8.10	Noon
PHI/Wheeler (R)	0-1	8.31	
SD/Martinez (R)	0-1	5.14	4:15 p.m.
ATL/Shuster (L)	0-1	7.71	
STL/Flaherty (R)	1-0	0.00	5 p.m.
MIL/Woodruff (R)	0-0	1.50	
WAS/Gore (L)	1-0	1.69	5:30 p.m.
COL/Ureña (R)	0-1	15.43	MLB

AMERICAN LEAGUE >>>

MATCHUP	W-L	ERA	TIME
TOR/Bassitt (R)	0-1	24.30	6:30 p.m.
Angels/Sandoval (L)	1-0	1.80	BSW
NY/TBD	—	—	Noon
BAL/Kremer (R)	0-0	15.00	
HOU/Urquidy (R)	0-0	6.75	1 p.m.
MIN/Gray (R)	1-0	0.00	
SEA/Gilbert (R)	0-1	1.50	1 p.m.
CLE/Civale (R)	1-0	0.00	MLB
OAK/Waldichuk (L)	0-1	9.53	3:30 p.m.
TB/Eflin (R)	1-0	1.80	

INTERLEAGUE >>>

MATCHUP	W-L	ERA	TIME
TEX/Eovaldi (R)	1-0	5.40	11:15 a.m.
CHI/Stroman (R)	1-0	0.00	
CHI/Giolito (R)	0-0	3.60	1 p.m.
PIT/Hill (L)	0-1	5.40	
KC/Keller (R)	0-1	3.86	1:30 p.m.
SF/Cobb (R)	0-0	2.46	

ODDS

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Favorite		Underdog	
DODGERS	-225	at Arizona	+188
at New York	-166	Miami	+140
at Philadelphia	-210	Cincinnati	+176
at Atlanta	-130	San Diego	+110
at Milwaukee	-162	St. Louis	+136
at Colorado	-130	Washington	+110

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Favorite		Underdog	
Toronto	-112	at ANGELS	-104
New York	-118	at Baltimore	+100
Houston	-120	at Minnesota	+102
Seattle	OFF	at Cleveland	OFF
at Tampa Bay	-225	Oakland	+188

INTERLEAGUE

Favorite		Underdog	
Texas	+106	at Chicago (NL)	-124
Chicago (AL)	-136	at Pittsburgh	+116
at San Francisco	-180	Kansas City	+152

LEADERS

NATIONAL LEAGUE >>>
Through Wednesday

Player	G	AB	H	R	Avg.
Swanson ChC	5	20	10	6	.500
B.Anderson Mil	6	18	9	7	.500
Arraez Mia	7	24	11	2	.458
Goldschmidt StL	6	20	9	3	.450
Happ ChC	5	16	7	6	.438
Gorman StL	5	16	7	3	.438
Stott Phi	6	23	10	0	.435
W.Smith DODGERS	5	19	8	5	.421
Reynolds Pit	6	24	10	6	.417
Bogaerts SD	6	22	9	5	.409

Home Runs

Reynolds, Pittsburgh	4

Runs Batted In

B.Anderson, Milwaukee	10
W.Smith, DODGERS	10
T.Thompson, DODGERS	8

AMERICAN LEAGUE >>>

Player	G	AB	H	R	Avg.
M.Chapman Tor	6	23	12	4	.522
Duvall Bos	5	21	10	7	.476
Moncada ChW	6	25	11	3	.440
Torres NYY	6	19	8	5	.421
Franco TB	6	24	10	4	.417
Kiermaier Tor	5	17	7	2	.412
Larnach Min	6	23	9	4	.391
Bichette Tor	6	29	9	4	.310
Ward ANGELS	6	27	10	6	.370
Trout ANGELS	6	19	7	5	.368

Home Runs

Raley, Tampa Bay	3
Gallo, Minnesota	3
Tucker, Houston	3

Runs Batted In

Alvarez, Houston	10
Duvall, Boston	9

ROSS D. FRANKLIN Associated Press

MAX MUNCY, right, reaches first base safely as the Diamondbacks' Merrill Kelly is unable to make a catch on a throwing error by Geraldo Perdomo in the Dodgers' third straight win.

Clutch hits their calling card

Dodgers continue to score with two outs and hold on after May's strong outing.

DODGERS 5
ARIZONA 2

BY JACK HARRIS

PHOENIX — The Dodgers are developing an important skill early on this season: Scoring runs with two outs.

In a 5-2 win over the Arizona Diamondbacks on Thursday, all of the Dodgers' runs came in such situations, giving the team just enough breathing room to survive some late-game scrambling in the bullpen.

Chris Taylor opened the scoring with an RBI single in the second. The Dodgers extended their lead in the third on an Arizona error and a J.D. Martinez double.

James Outman added a two-out single of his own in the sixth, part of a two-hit performance that extended his season-opening on-base streak to six games.

Then Freddie Freeman hit his first home run of the season in the seventh — for a 5-1 lead after Dustin May's six-inning, one-run gem.

"I think it's just a bunch of grinders," Freeman said, with the Dodgers' 23 two-out runs leading the majors through the first week of the season. "Guys who grind out at-bats, don't take pitches off."

The end of the game, however, became something of a grind, as well, after manager Dave Roberts got word earlier that right-hander Brusdar Graterol's back had tightened up on him.

With Graterol down, the seventh inning went to Alex Vesia and Yency Almonte. Vesia gave up one run, cutting the lead to three. Then Almonte almost yielded a tying home run to Josh Rojas, watching his fly ball sail just foul before finally ending the inning.

Because the Dodgers wanted to save their best reliever, Evan Phillips, for the ninth, Phil Bickford was summoned to face the heart of Arizona's order in the eighth. He gave up a leadoff double and threw a wild pitch, but settled down, showing increased velocity of 96-97 mph to escape the inning — and effectively end the game.

"That's as good of an outing as I've seen from Phil in quite some time," Roberts said. "For me, Dustin and Phil were the two stars of the night."

And when coupled with their two-out hitting, it lifted the team to a third straight win.

DODGERS 5
D'BACKS 2

Streak	Won 3	**This month**	4-1
Home	4-2	**Road**	1-0
Division	5-2	**Interleague**	0-0

Next: Tonight at Arizona, 6:30
TV/Radio: SportsNet LA/570, 1020

Dodgers	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Betts 2b	4	0	0	0	.250
Freeman 1b	5	2	2	1	.385
Smith c	4	1	1	0	.391
Muncy 3b	3	2	0	0	.130
Martinez dh	3	0	1	1	.231
Peralta lf	4	0	0	0	.188
Outman cf	3	0	2	1	.353
Taylor ss	4	0	1	1	.111
Heyward rf	1	0	0	0	.300
a-Thpsn rf	1	0	0	0	.250
Totals	32	5	7	4	

Arizona	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
J.Rojas 3b	4	0	1	1	.286
Marte 2b	4	0	1	0	.179
Gurriel Jr. dh	4	0	0	0	.179
Walker 1b	4	0	0	0	.240
Carroll lf-cf	4	0	0	0	.222
McCarthy rf	4	1	2	0	.250
Moreno c	4	0	1	0	.176
Thomas cf	1	0	0	0	.000
b-Lewis lf	2	0	0	0	.133
Perdomo ss	1	1	0	0	.429
Totals	32	2	5	1	

Dodgers	012	001	100	–5
Arizona	000	001	100	–2

a-grounded out for Heyward in the 7th. b-grounded out for Thomas in the 7th.

Walks—Dodgers 6: Smith 1, Muncy 1, Martinez 1, Outman 1, Heyward 1, Thompson 1. Arizona 3: Thomas 1, Perdomo 2. **Strikeouts**—Dodgers 8: Betts 3, Freeman 1, Muncy 1, Martinez 1, Peralta 1, Taylor 1. Arizona 8: J.Rojas 1, Marte 2, Gurriel Jr. 2, Walker 1, Lewis 1, Perdomo 1. **E**—Perdomo (1). **LOB**—Dodgers 7, Arizona 6. **2B**—Freeman (2), Martinez (3), Smith (3), J.Rojas (2), Moreno (2), Marte (3). **3B**—McCarthy (1). **HR**—Freeman (1), off K.Nelson. **RBIs**—Taylor (4), Martinez (5), Outman (6), Freeman (1), J.Rojas (3). **RISP**—Dodgers 2 for 9; Arizona 0 for 8. **Runners moved up**—Lewis. **GIDP**—Freeman. **DP**—Arizona 1 (Perdomo, Walker).

Dodgers	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
May, W, 1-0	6	2	1	1	2	5	83	0.69
Vesia	⅓	2	1	1	0	0	15	13.50
Almonte, H, 1	⅔	0	0	0	1	0	13	3.38
Bickford, H, 1	1	1	0	0	0	2	21	5.40
Phillips, S, 2-2	1	0	0	0	0	1	15	0.00
Arizona	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Kelly, L, 0-1	5⅓	6	4	4	4	4	99	3.86
K.Nelson	1	1	1	1	0	1	13	3.00
Ginkel	1⅓	0	0	0	0	1	12	6.75
C.Vargas	1	0	0	0	2	2	24	6.75

Inherited runners-scored—Almonte 1-0, K.Nelson 2-0. **HBP**—C.Vargas (Betts). **WP**—Bickford. **PB**—Smith (1).

U—Ramon De Jesus, Alfonso Marquez, Doug Eddings, Lance Barrett. **T**—2:43. **Tickets sold**—48,034 (48,359).

ROCKIES 1
NATIONALS 0

Kyle Freeland pitched four-hit ball over 6⅔ innings, Jurickson Profar made several nifty catches in left field and Colorado won its home opener in 2 hours, 18 minutes. Kris Bryant drove in the only run with a single in the fifth. It was the 11th 1-0 game at Coors Field and the first since July 4, 2018. Washington dropped its fourth straight.

Washington	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Thomas rf	3	0	1	0	.333
Call lf	3	0	0	0	.214
Candlrio 3b	4	0	1	0	.185
Meneses dh	4	0	0	0	.172
Smith 1b	4	0	1	0	.261
Ruiz c	4	0	0	0	.238
García 2b	4	0	1	0	.150
Robles cf	3	0	0	0	.300
Abrams ss	3	0	2	0	.200
Totals	32	0	6	0	

Colorado	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Profar lf	4	0	1	0	.133
Bryant rf	4	0	2	1	.357
Blckmn dh	3	0	0	0	.292
Cron 1b	4	0	0	0	.259
McMhn 2b	4	0	1	0	.192
Díaz c	4	0	1	0	.182
Montero 3b	4	0	3	0	.333
Trejo 3b	0	0	0	0	.333
Daza cf	3	0	0	0	.208
Tovar ss	3	1	1	0	.190
Totals	33	1	9	1	

Washington	000	000	000	–0
Colorado	000	010	00x	–1

Walks—Washington 2: Thomas 1, Call 1. Colorado 1: Blackmon 1. **Strikeouts**—Washington 8: Thomas 1, Call 1, Meneses 2, Smith 1, Ruiz 1, Robles 1, Abrams 1. Colorado 9: Profar 1, Cron 3, McMahon 3, Daza 1, Tovar 1.

LOB—Washington 7, Colorado 9. **2B**—Bryant (3), Tovar (1). **RBIs**—Bryant (2). **CS**—Abrams (1).

Runners left in scoring position—Washington 1 (Meneses); Colorado 3 (McMahon, Cron, Tovar). **RISP**—Washington 0 for 1; Colorado 2 for 9.

Runners moved up—Bryant, Blackmon, Díaz.

Washington	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Gray, L, 0-2	6	8	1	1	1	6	102	4.91
Thompson	2	1	0	0	0	3	25	1.29
Colorado	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Freeland, W, 2-0	6⅔	4	0	0	2	5	86	0.00
Lawrence, H, 1	1⅓	2	0	0	0	1	19	0.00
Johnson, S, 2-2	1	0	0	0	0	2	9	3.00

Inherited runners-scored—Lawrence 1-0.

U—Cory Blaser, Carlos Torres, Jansen Visconti, Ron Kulpa. **T**—2:18. **Tickets sold**—48,230 (50,144).

BRAVES 7
PADRES 6

Orlando Arcia singled in the winning run in the ninth inning for his third hit and Atlanta won its home opener. Arcia homered and also had a double. A.J. Minter pitched a scoreless ninth.

San Diego	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Grisham cf	4	0	1	0	.240
Soto lf	4	0	0	0	.160
Machado 3b	5	0	2	0	.280
Bogaerts ss	3	2	0	0	.360
Crnwrth 1b	2	3	1	1	.217
Carpenter dh	3	1	1	3	.250
Nola c	4	0	0	0	.188
Odor rf	2	0	0	0	.111
a-Azocar rf	2	0	1	1	.333
Kim 2b	4	0	1	0	.286
Totals	33	6	7	5	

Atlanta	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Acuña Jr. rf	4	1	1	0	.355
Olson 1b	4	1	2	2	.333
Riley 3b	3	0	1	1	.280
d'Arnd dh	5	0	1	1	.355
Albies 2b	5	0	0	0	.250
Murphy c	3	1	2	0	.231
Harris II cf	1	0	0	0	.217
Hilliard cf	4	0	1	0	.250
Pillar lf	3	1	1	1	.400
b-Rosario	1	1	1	0	.286
Arcia ss	4	2	3	2	.370
Totals	37	7	13	7	

San Diego	000	301	020	–6
Atlanta	101	200	021	–7

Two outs when winning run scored. a-grounded out for Odor in the 6th. b-doubled for Pillar in the 9th.

Walks—San Diego 7: Grisham 1, Soto 1, Bogaerts 2, Cronenworth 2, Carpenter 1. Atlanta 7: Acuña Jr. 1, Olson 1, Riley 1, Murphy 2, Pillar 1, Arcia 1 **Strikeouts**—San Diego 12: Grisham 3, Soto 1, Machado 2, Carpenter 1, Nola 2, Odor 2, Kim 1. Atlanta 7: Riley 1, d'Arnaud 2, Albies 1, Hilliard 2, Pillar 1 **E**—Yates (1). **LOB**—San Diego 7, Atlanta 12. **2B**—Machado (1), Acuña Jr. (2), Olson (4), Murphy (1), Arcia (2), Rosario (1). **HR**—Carpenter (1), off Strider; Cronenworth (1), off Luetge; Arcia (2), off Snell. **RBIs**—Carpenter 3 (6), Cronenworth (1), Azocar (1), Riley (6), Arcia 2 (4), Pillar (1), Olson 2 (9), d'Arnaud (5). **SB**—Harris II (2). **SF**—Riley. **DP**—San Diego 1 (Bogaerts, Kim, Cronenworth); Atlanta 1 (Albies, Olson).

San Diego	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Snell	3⅓	6	4	4	4	2	88	7.88
Tapia	1⅓	1	0	0	2	2	35	4.15
Wilson	2	0	0	0	1	2	28	1.69
Hill, BS, 0-1	1	4	2	2	0	1	22	4.91
Crismatt, L, 0-1	⅔	2	1	1	0	0	17	16.20
Atlanta	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Strider	5	4	3	3	3	9	101	2.45
Luetge, BS, 0-1	1	1	1	1	1	0	24	9.00
Anderson	1	0	0	0	0	1	17	2.45
Yates	1	1	2	2	2	1	21	9.00
Minter, W, 1-0	1	1	0	0	1	1	20	0.00

Inherited runners-scored—Tapia 3-0. **WP**—Luetge, Yates.

U—Jeremie Rehak, Paul Emmel, Chad Fairchild, Nic Lentz. **T**—3:14. **Tickets sold**—42,803 (41,149).

RED SOX 6
TIGERS 3

Boston's Adam Duvall, who is hitting .458 with three home runs and 12 RBIs to start the season, hit a tiebreaking, three-run homer in the sixth and Rafael Devers hit a solo homer in the fourth.

Boston	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Verdugo rf	4	1	1	0	.333
Devers 3b	4	2	2	2	.323
Turner dh	3	0	0	0	.280
Yoshida lf	3	1	2	0	.250
Duvall cf	3	1	1	3	.458
Casas 1b	4	0	0	0	.130
Arroyo 2b	3	1	0	0	.158
McGuire c	3	0	1	0	.308
Hrnndz ss	4	0	0	1	.136
Totals	31	6	7	6	

Detroit	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Vierling rf-3b	4	0	1	0	.333
Báez ss	4	0	0	0	.080
Greene cf	4	0	0	0	.296
Torkelson 1b	4	1	1	0	.222
Haase lf	3	0	1	0	.130
c-Crpntr rf	1	0	1	0	.250
Cabrera dh	3	0	1	1	.176
Schoop 3b	1	1	0	0	.111
a-Maton 3b	1	0	0	0	.067
Rogers c	4	1	1	2	.250
Kreidler 2b	2	0	0	0	.154
b-Medws rf	2	0	0	0	.238
Totals	33	3	6	3	

Boston	001	104	000	–6
Detroit	021	000	000	–3

a-grounded out for Schoop in the 6th. b-grounded out for Kreidler in the 7th. c-doubled for Haase in the 8th.

Walks—Boston 4: Yoshida 1, Duvall 1, Arroyo 1, McGuire 1. Detroit 5: Vierling 1, Báez 1, Cabrera 1, Schoop 1, Maton 1. **Strikeouts**—Boston 3: Devers 1, McGuire 2. Detroit 9: Báez 1, Greene 2, Torkelson 2, Haase 2, Rogers 1, Kreidler 1. **E**—Hernández (3). **LOB**—Boston 3, Detroit 8. **2B**—Devers (3), Yoshida (1), Carpenter (3). **HR**—Devers (2), off Turnbull; Duvall (3), off Cisnero; Rogers (2), off Sale. **RBIs**—Hernández (4), Devers 2 (4), Duvall 3 (12), Rogers 2 (4), Cabrera (2). **SB**—Yoshida (2). **DP**—Boston 1 (Casas); Detroit 2 (Báez, Torkelson; Báez, Torkelson).

Boston	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Sale, W, 1-0	5	4	3	3	3	7	74	11.25
Schreiber, H, 2	1	0	0	0	1	1	17	2.25
Martin, H, 2	1	1	0	0	0	0	15	0.00
Brasier, H, 1	1	1	0	0	1	1	21	6.75
Jansen, S, 1-1	1	0	0	0	0	0	16	0.00
Detroit	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Turnbull, L, 0-2	5⅔	5	5	5	2	1	72	13.50
Cisnero	1⅓	1	1	1	0	1	19	9.00
Englert	1⅓	1	0	0	1	1	25	1.69
Lange	⅔	0	0	0	1	0	8	3.38

Inherited runners-scored—Cisnero 2-2, Lange 2-0. **HBP**—Turnbull (Turner).

U—Edwin Moscoso, Larry Vanover, Chris Guccione, Dan Merzel. **T**—2:32. **Tickets sold**—44,650 (41,083).

GIANTS 16
WHITE SOX 6

J.D. Davis hit a grand slam in the ninth off mop-up reliever Hanser Alberto for his third hit, Michael Conforto had a three-run homer among three hits and San Francisco powered past Chicago.

San Fran.	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Wade lf	2	1	1	0	.250
Johnsn cf	2	0	0	0	.333
Flores 1b	5	2	2	2	.364
Pdrsn dh	4	0	1	2	.217
b-Beaty p	1	1	1	0	.500
Villar 2b	5	3	2	0	.273
Confrto rf	4	3	3	3	.240
Davis 3b	6	2	3	5	.313
Ystrzski cf	6	1	1	2	.240
Estrda ss	6	1	3	1	.409
Sabol c	6	2	3	1	.222
Totals	47	16	20	16	

Chicago	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Andrsn ss	5	0	1	2	.276
Rbrt Jr. cf	4	0	1	0	.323
Colás cf	1	0	0	0	.273
Vaughn 1b	3	0	1	1	.273
Burger dh	2	0	1	0	.500
a-Shets dh	1	1	0	0	.200
Albrto 3b	5	1	2	0	.333
Bntndi lf	5	1	1	1	.267
Andrus 2b	4	1	2	2	.185
Zavala c	5	2	1	0	.375
Gonzálz rf	4	0	1	0	.333
Totals	39	6	11	6	

San Francisco	310	222	024	–16
Chicago	020	100	003	– 6

a-walked for Burger in the 4th. b-singled for Pederson in the 9th.

Walks—San Francisco 5: Wade Jr. 1, Flores 1, Pederson 1, Conforto 2. Chicago 5: Vaughn 2, Sheets 2, Andrus 1. **Strikeouts**—San Francisco 9: Wade Jr. 1, Johnson 1, Pederson 2, Villar 1, Conforto 1, Davis 1, Estrada 1, Sabol 1. Chicago 10: Anderson 2, Robert Jr. 1, Colás 1, Benintendi 1, Andrus 1, Zavala 2, González 2. **E**—Estrada (1), Sabol (1). **LOB**—San Francisco 11, Chicago 11. **2B**—Villar (1), Wade Jr. (1), Estrada (1), Burger (1), Benintendi (2), Andrus (1). **HR**—Conforto (2), off Lynn; Sabol (1), off Lynn; Yastrzemski (2), off Lynn; Flores (1), off Ruiz; Davis (2), off Alberto. **RBIs**—Conforto 3 (4), Sabol (1), Pederson 2 (6), Yastrzemski 2 (5), Flores 2 (2), Davis 5 (6), Estrada (3), Anderson 2 (3), Vaughn (6), Benintendi (1), Andrus 2 (2). **SB**—Zavala (1), Andrus (2).

San Francisco	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Wood	3	6	3	1	2	3	71	3.00
Junis, W, 2-0	4	2	0	0	2	4	69	1.42
Brebbia	1	0	0	0	0	2	15	3.00
Beaty	1	3	3	3	1	1	22	27.00
Chicago	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Lynn, L, 0-1	4⅓	9	8	8	3	5	99	9.00
Ruiz	1⅓	2	2	2	1	1	37	22.09
Santos	2	5	2	2	0	3	33	7.36
Alberto	1	4	4	4	1	0	18	36.00

HBP—Ruiz (Wade Jr.), Santos (Villar).

T—2:50. **Tickets sold**—18,261 (40,241).

BLUE JAYS 6
ROYALS 3

Kevin Gausman pitched six scoreless innings, Vlad Guerrero Jr. and Cavan Biggio hit homers, and Toronto got its third straight win. Kansas City avoided its fourth shutout of the season.

Toronto	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Bichette ss	5	1	2	1	.324
Grro Jr. dh	5	2	3	1	.407
Varsho lf	p4	1	2	1	.357
M.Chan 3b	4	0	1	2	.481
Merrifld 2b	4	0	1	0	.235
Belt 1b	4	0	0	0	.053
Jansen c	4	0	0	0	.067
Biggio rf	4	1	1	1	.231
Springer rf	0	0	0	0	.241
Kiermar cf	4	1	1	0	.381
Totals	38	6	11	6	

Kansas City	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Witt Jr. ss	5	1	2	1	.154
Melendez c	3	1	0	0	.095
Perez dh	4	1	1	0	.261
Psqntno 1b	4	0	1	1	.143
Olivares lf	4	0	2	1	.267
Massey 2b	3	0	1	0	.158
a-Reyes	1	0	0	0	.077
Lopez 2b	0	0	0	0	.111
Dozier 3b	3	0	0	0	.059
Pratto rf	4	0	1	0	.143
Eaton cf	4	0	0	0	.000
Totals	35	3	8	3	

Toronto	210	110	100	–6
Kansas City	000	000	030	–3

a-grounded out for Massey in the 8th.

Walks— Kansas City 3: Melendez 2, Dozier 1. **Strikeouts**—Toronto 12: Bichette 1, Varsho 2, M.Chapman 1, Belt 3, Jansen 3, Biggio 2. Kansas City 12: Witt Jr. 1, Melendez 2, Pasquantino 1, Olivares 1, Massey 1, Dozier 3, Pratto 2, Eaton 1 **LOB**—Toronto 5, Kansas City 8. **2B**—Varsho (3), M.Chapman (6), Kiermaier (1), Olivares (1). **HR**—Biggio (1), off Lyles; Guerrero Jr. (2), off Lyles; Witt Jr. (1), off Richards. **RBIs**—M.Chapman 2 (7), Bichette (3), Biggio (1), Guerrero Jr. (6), Varsho (4), Witt Jr. (3), Pasquantino (2), Olivares (3).

Toronto	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Gausman, W, 1-1	6	4	0	0	2	7	86	0.00
Bass	1	0	0	0	0	2	8	3.86
Richards	0	2	3	3	1	0	16	13.50
Mayza	⅓	2	0	0	0	0	6	3.38
García, H, 2	⅔	0	0	0	0	2	11	6.00
Cimber, S, 1-1	1	0	0	0	0	1	14	0.00
Kansas City	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Lyles, L, 0-2	5⅔	8	5

THE DAY IN SPORTS

UCLA's Jaquez moving on to the NBA

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

UCLA senior **Jaime Jaquez Jr**. announced he would forgo a final season of eligibility to enter the NBA draft, a move that had been expected.

Jaquez, who finished as the No. 8 scorer in school history with 1,802 points, announced his decision Thursday on social media.

"Please know, I gave you everything that I had," Jaquez wrote. "My four years at UCLA have been incredible, and I'll always be proud to be a Bruin."

A consensus second-team All-American, Jaquez averaged 17.8 points and 8.2 rebounds last season on the way to being selected UCLA's first Pac-12 player of the year since **Kevin Love** in 2008. He is widely projected to be a second-round pick.

— Ben Bolch

ETC.

Williamson still out for Pelicans

The New Orleans Pelicans ruled out **Zion Williamson** for Friday night's game against the New York Knicks but stopped short of providing a timeline for how much longer the All-Star forward will be sidelined by his right hamstring injury.

"After further evaluation, it has been determined that Zion Williamson will continue his rehabilitation and conditioning regimen," Pelicans executive vice president of basketball operations **David Griffin** said in a statement.

The NBA denied a protest by the Dallas Mavericks over a sequence that led to an uncontested basket for Golden State in a two-point win by the Warriors.

The Chargers re-signed backup center **Will Clapp**. Entering his sixth NFL season, Clapp started three games in 2022 when starter **Corey Linsley** was out.

— Jeff Miller

The New York Jets signed former Seattle Seahawks defensive lineman **Quinton Jefferson** to help fill one of the team's biggest needs. The team also signed quarterback **Tim Boyle** to a one-year contract. ... Defensive tackle **Jordan Phillips** returned to the Buffalo Bills after signing a one-year contract. ... The Chicago Bears signed defensive lineman **Rasheem Green** to a one-year contract.

New York Mets catcher **Omar Narváez** will be put on the injured list because of a strained left calf that probably will sideline him several weeks.

Denis Gurianov of the Montreal Canadiens decided to not wear his team's themed warmup jersey for Pride night, citing family reasons. The Russian forward is the seventh NHL player to opt out of wearing rainbow-colored jerseys on their teams' Pride nights.

Freshman **Luke Mittelstadt** scored two third-period goals in two-and-a-half minutes and top-ranked Minnesota beat Boston University 6-2 in the opening game of the NCAA Frozen Four at Tampa, Fla. In the second semifinal, No. 2 Quinnipiac knocked off No. 3 Michigan 5-2 to set up Saturday's championship.

Ex-NBA guard **Ben Gordon** was arrested on weapons and threatening charges after he began behaving erratically in a Connecticut juice shop, police said.

Top-seeded **Jessica Pegula** lost 10 straight games and was down 4-0 in the final set before rallying to a 7-5, 4-6, 6-4 win over **Irina-Camelia Begu** to earn a spot in the quarterfinals of the Charleston (S.C.) Open.

Denny Hamlin's penalties for hitting **Ross Chastain** from behind at Phoenix last month will stand, according to a decision by a NASCAR appeals panel. Hamlin was fined $50,000 and docked 25 points. ... The Hendrick Motorsports teams of points leader **Alex Bowman** and two-time winner **William Byron** were penalized 60 points and five playoff points apiece by NASCAR for violations found in the Richmond post-race inspections.

Louisiana State's national champion women's basketball team will accept an invitation from **President Biden** to visit the White House, a university spokesman confirmed.

Frank Lampard was hired as interim manager for Chelsea to give the club time to find a replacement for the fired **Graham Potter**.

TENNIS RESULTS

$780,637 CHARLESTON OPEN
At Charleston, S.C.
Surface: Green Clay

SINGLES (third round)—Paula Badosa (12), Spain, d. Diana Shnaider, Russia, 6-1, 6-3; Anna Kalinskaya, Russia, d. Victoria Azarenka (6), Belarus, 6-4, 7-6 (5); Ons Jabeur (2), Tunisia, d. Caroline Dolehide, 6-3, 7-5; Ekaterina Alexandrova (7), Russia, d. Julia Grabher, Austria, 6-4, 6-2; Daria Kasatkina (3), Russia, d. Bernarda Pera, 6-3, 7-6 (3); Jessica Pegula (1), d. Irina-Camelia Begu (15), Romania, 7-5, 4-6, 6-4; Belinda Bencic (4), Switzerland, d. Shelby Rogers, 4-6, 7-5, 6-2.

$612,000 ESTORIL OPEN
At Estoril, Portugal
Surface: Red clay

SINGLES (second round)—Miomir Kecmanovic (6), Serbia, d. Jurij Rodionov, Austria, 6-0, 6-1; Dominic Thiem, Austria, d. Ben Shelton (8), 6-2, 6-2; Bernabe Zapata Miralles, Spain, d. Hubert Hurkacz (2), Poland, 6-7 (7), 6-4, 6-2; Quentin Halys, France, d. Roberto Bautista Agut (4), Spain, 7-6 (5), 7-5.

$612,000 GRAND PRIX HUSSAN II
At Marrakech, Morocco
Surface: Red clay

SINGLES (second round)—Roberto Carballes Baena, Spain, d. Dimitar Kuzmanov, Bulgaria, 2-0, retired; Talon Griekspoor (4), Netherlands, d. Elias Ymer, Sweden, 1-6, 6-3, 6-4; Christopher O'Connell, Australia, d. Botic Van de Zandschulp (3), Netherlands, 6-7 (8), 6-4, 6-0; Daniel Evans (2), Britain, d. Alexei Popyrin, Australia, 6-1, 6-3; Andrea Vavassori, Italy, d. Jaume Munar, Spain, 6-7 (4), 7-6 (6), 6-4; Lorenzo Musetti (1), Italy, d. Hugo Gaston, France, 6-2, 6-3; Pavel Kotov, Russia, d. Benjamin Bonzi (7), France, 6-0, 7-6 (2); Alexandre Muller, France, d. Francesco Passaro, Italy, 6-4, 6-4.

Stanley set to go against Pleasant in 200

Granada Hills sprinter ready to face Gardena Serra friend, rival at Arcadia Invitational.

ERIC SONDHEIMER
ON HIGH SCHOOLS

For those who enjoy repeating the famous line "I feel the need . . . the need for speed," from the 1986 movie "Top Gun," Saturday is shaping up to be a memorable doubleheader of speed in the city of Arcadia.

First there's the Santa Anita Derby in the afternoon for thoroughbreds, followed by the Arcadia Invitational at Arcadia High at night, where the state record holder for 100 meters, Rodrick Pleasant of Gardena Serra, will be challenged in the 200 by the equally fast Dijon Stanley of Granada Hills in a matchup that should produce lots of oohs and aahs.

They're football players headed to Oregon and Utah, respectively, and have been competing against each other since their youth days.

"It's been some amazing battles," Pleasant said.

Added Stanley: "Me and Rodrick are good friends. It will be a real good battle. It goes back to when we were kids. I've been racing Rodrick for years. I want to give him a run."

The 200 is not the best event for Pleasant or Stanley. That's the 100 for Pleasant and the 400 for Stanley. Pleasant tied the Trabuco Hills Invitational record last week in his first 100 of the season, running 10.40 seconds. Stanley has run the fastest time in the state this year in the 200 at 20.86 and wants to see what he can do against Pleasant.

"I feel I'm a serious contender in the 200," he said.

The 400 is the race Stanley embraces. He finished third in the state last year in the 400 and is seeking redemption.

"A loss is a loss and I want to come back and avenge myself," he said.

He has run the 400 for years even though it can be a grueling race producing exhaustion and pain at the end.

"The 100 is 10 seconds," he said. "You really can't mess up. You have no time to make mistakes. The 400 I feel is more entertaining. You can build up and develop. You want to leave everything out there. You get up feeling great about yourself knowing you pushed yourself as hard as you could push."

He won the City Section 400 last year in 46.94 seconds and is the section's most accomplished 400 runner since David Gettis of Dorsey ran 45.84 to win the 2005 state title.

Stanley's success in football and track has been a boon for the City Section. He came to Granada Hills from Simi Valley Grace Brethren after his freshman season at a time when City Section football and track were struggling.

He's paved the way for others to follow, proving you can earn a college scholarship and gain respect in the City Section.

He trusted the process.

"I feel great what I did," he said. "I can't take all the accolades. All my coaches and teammates have been helping and supportive. A lot of people may have thought it wouldn't work and was crazy transferring to a City Section school. It worked for me and it's working out for others. It's bringing life back to the City and that's what I wanted to do."

The City Section will be well represented at Arcadia by Carson's powerful female sprinters, led by the defending state 100 champion Reign Redmond, who has run 11.54 in the 100.

Distance standout Sadie Engelhardt of Ventura, shotputter April Fontenette of Sherman Oaks Notre Dame and high jumper/long jumper Meagan Humphries of Castaic also will be Arcadia contenders.

Field events begin at 3 p.m. Saturday, with running events at 5 p.m.

STANDINGS

Standings have been arranged to reflect how the teams will be determined for the playoffs. Teams are ranked 1-15 by record.. The top six teams in each conference qualify for the playoffs. Teams seven through 10 will participate in a play-in tournament with the top-seeded play-in team meeting the lowest qualifying play-in team. The next-lowest qualifying team would play the second, etc. Head-to-head competition is the first of several tiebreakers, followed by conference record. (Western Conference divisions:S-Southwest; P-Pacific; N-Northwest; Eastern Conference divisions: A-Atlantic; C-Central; S-Southeast).

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Team	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	Rk.
1. z-Denver	52	28	.650		5-5	N1
2. y-Memphis	50	30	.625	2	7-3	S1
3. y-Sacramento	48	32	.600	4	5-5	P1
4. x-Phoenix	45	35	.563	7	7-3	P2
5. CLIPPERS	42	38	.525	10	5-5	P3
5. Golden State	42	38	.525	10	6-4	P4
7. LAKERS	41	39	.513	11	7-3	P5
7. New Orleans	41	39	.513	11	8-2	S2
9. Minnesota	40	40	.500	12	5-5	N2
10. Oklahoma City	39	42	.481	12½	4-6	N3
11. Dallas	38	42	.475	14	3-7	S3
12. Utah	36	44	.450	16	2-8	N4
13. Portland	33	47	.413	19	2-8	N5
14. San Antonio	21	59	.263	31	3-7	S4
15. Houston	20	60	.250	32	2-8	S5

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Team	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	Rk.
1. z-Milwaukee	58	22	.725		8-2	C1
2. y-Boston	55	25	.688	3	7-3	A1
3. x-Philadelphia	52	28	.650	6	4-6	A2
4. x-Cleveland	51	30	.630	7½	7-3	C2
5. x-New York	47	33	.588	11	7-3	A3
6. Brooklyn	44	36	.550	14	5-5	A4
7. Miami	43	37	.538	15	6-4	S1
8. Atlanta	41	39	.513	17	6-4	S2
9. Toronto	40	40	.500	18	6-4	A5
10. Chicago	38	42	.475	20	5-5	C3
11. Indiana	34	46	.425	24	2-8	C4
11. Orlando	34	46	.425	24	6-4	S3
11. Washington	34	46	.425	24	2-8	S4
14. Charlotte	26	54	.325	32	4-6	S5
15. Detroit	16	64	.200	42	0-10	C5

x-clinched playoff berth; y-division; z-conference

THURSDAY'S RESULTS

Cleveland 118, Orlando 94	Miami 129, Philadelphia 101
San Antonio 129, Portland 127	Oklahoma City 114, Utah 98
Phoenix 119, Denver 115	

TODAY'S GAMES

Favorite	Line	Underdog	Time
Houston	1½	at Charlotte	4 p.m.
at Washington	OFF	Miami	4 p.m.
at Indiana	7½	Detroit	4 p.m.
at Atlanta	OFF	Philadelphia	4:30 p.m.
at Brooklyn	7	Orlando	4:30 p.m.
at Boston	OFF	Toronto	4:30 p.m.
at Milwaukee	OFF	Memphis	5 p.m.
at New Orleans	OFF	New York	5 p.m.
at Dallas	8	Chicago	5:30 p.m.
at Sacramento	OFF	Golden State	7 p.m.
at LAKERS	OFF	Phoenix	7:30 p.m.

SCORING LEADERS

Through Wednesday's games

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Embiid, PHI	65	719	659	2162	33.3
Doncic, DAL	65	715	510	2125	32.7
Lillard, POR	58	556	510	1866	32.2

Lakers not a championship team

[**Plaschke,** from B10]
of resolve they could muster.

And it still wasn't enough.

LeBron James and Anthony Davis played the second game on back-to-back nights as if it were the first game of the season, big minutes on aching joints, going for broke.

And they broke.

The rest of the Lakers played their third game in four nights at the end of a long trip as if it were their only game this week, hustling, competing, working.

And ultimately wilting.

The hosting Clippers brought the heat, and the Lakers couldn't match it. The Clippers-centric arena brought the noise, and the Lakers crumbled under it.

In the closest thing to a playoff preview, the Lakers seemed slow and tired and hobbled, and completely unprepared for those playoffs in absorbing a 125-118 loss against a short-handed team that eventually outworked them into postseason hell.

Can you say "play-in game?" With two regular-season games remaining, that's where the Lakers are probably headed, a desperate and dangerous place where one bad night can send you home for the summer.

A night just like Wednesday.

Afterward, Davis sat wearily in front of his locker with his feet in a bucket of ice.

"I've been better," he said.

So has his team.

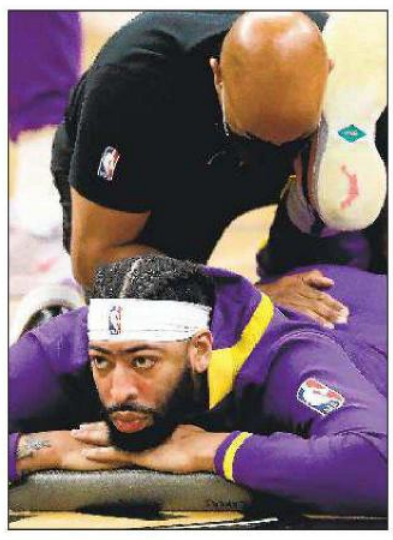
The narrative entering the maelstrom was bright, the Lakers having won seven of eight games and going 14-6 since the All-Star break for the third-best record in the league.

Folks were talking about them being serious title contenders. Folks were positioning the Lakers as the playoff team nobody wanted to face.

That changed quickly. If Wednesday were any indication, the Lakers are a team that any young and upstart group would pay to play.

If a fully formed Lakers team couldn't beat the Clippers in one game without George and with a playoff seed on the line, how are they going to win a grueling seven-game series when every game is like this?

Yes, their travel schedule stunk. Yes, they endured two snowstorms in the last week and played a tough overtime game in Utah on Tuesday night while the Clippers were working on three days' rest.



Luis Sinco Los Angeles Times

A HURTING Anthony Davis gets stretched out before Lakers game against the Clippers.

But no, no matter what everyone from coach Darvin Ham to James said afterward, there can be no excuses this time of year.

Championship teams win this game. Championship teams don't have two marquee players who are so hobbled they nearly didn't play in this game. Championship teams don't start so slow in this game that it felt over almost before Chuck the Condor flashed his hideous beak.

The Clippers jumped to a 10-1 lead and the Lakers' shoulders slumped. The Clippers led 71-52 at halftime and James had three points, one of the 14 worst halves of his 20-year career.

The Clippers applied the dagger on an alley-oop dunk by Kawhi Leonard with 6:35 left in the game while Davis was headed toward a stat line that showed him making all of seven baskets. When it mercifully ended, James had roared back to score 33 but also wore six turnovers and a perpetual grimace.

And, oh yeah, the Clippers have now won 11 straight against the Lakers while also winning 36 of their last 43 games against their unfriendly neighbors.

As always, the Clippers are deep and the Lakers are not, with the Clippers bench outscoring the Lakers bench 55-25. With Davis and James hurting, the Lakers needed big contributions from their other starters, but neither Austin Reaves nor D'Angelo Russell nor Jarred Vanderbilt were able to make an impact.

Two lockers over from Davis, James winced.

"Coming off the road trip ... getting back late last night after an overtime game ... it was a tough game for us," James said. "This was one of those scheduling conflicts in the season, and it definitely got the best of us tonight."

Down the hall, Ham sighed.

He was asked the reason for the early deficits.

"The trip we just came off of," he said.

It was surprising that someone as uncompromising as James and Ham would lead with that. The player and coach who have never parried excuses were making an excuse that could be used by every other team in the league.

"You don't want to use excuses," Ham said. "Sometimes, they're not excuses. They're just real-life circumstances. And we knew in order to make a game of it and give ourselves a chance, we had to start the right way. And obviously getting in very late, dealing with some different types of weather and different elements. It was going to be tough."

It was tough hearing that. It was even tougher watching it.

Meanwhile, the Clippers suddenly appear to be in sync after an unsettling season. They probably earned a top-six seed and a first-round series against either Sacramento or Phoenix. If they can somehow advance to the second round and George returns from his knee injury, who knows?

"It is time to really gear up and play playoff-style basketball and I think we have the veteran experience and understanding of how to do that," said Norman Powell, who led the Clippers with 27 points off the bench on a passel of beautiful hanging drives.

The Lakers have that same veteran experience. They have that same understanding. What they don't have is enough health, they don't have enough resilience, and they didn't have a victory Wednesday night when they so badly needed one.

The Lakers are an interesting team, an energetic team, one might even say they have morphed into an inspirational team.

But — sigh, wince, grimace — they are not a championship team.

Cavaliers 118, Magic 94

CLEVELAND

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Stevens	31	5-14	1-2	1-6	1	1	13
Wade	22	3-7	0-0	2-6	2	1	7
Lopez	18	4-4	0-0	1-2	3	4	8
Osman	22	7-11	1-1	0-5	4	0	19
Rubio	20	2-7	0-0	0-2	5	2	5
I.Mobley	28	7-12	2-2	2-4	1	3	18
Green	26	8-14	0-0	0-3	3	1	21
Neto	24	3-6	2-2	1-2	8	4	8
Diakite	23	5-7	2-2	2-8	1	5	13
Merrill	21	2-6	0-0	0-4	3	0	6
Totals	**46-88**		**8-9**	**9-42**	**31**	**21**	**118**

Shooting: Field goals, 52.3%; free throws, 88.9%

Three-point goals: 18-38 (Green 5-9, Osman 4-6, I.Mobley 2-3, Stevens 2-5, Merrill 2-6, Diakite 1-2, Rubio 1-2, Wade 1-4, Neto 0-1). Team Rebounds: 4. Team Turnovers: 1. Blocked Shots: 8 (I.Mobley 2, Lopez 2, Diakite, Green, Neto, Stevens). Turnovers: 16 (Neto 6, Diakite 3, Wade 2, Green, I.Mobley, Lopez, Osman, Stevens). Steals: 13 (Green 3, I.Mobley 3, Stevens 2, Diakite, Lopez, Merrill, Rubio, Wade).

ORLANDO

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Bol	29	6-15	5-5	1-8	3	0	18
Okeke	31	1-6	0-0	1-5	3	3	2
M.Wagner	20	3-11	1-2	1-4	2	3	9
Houstan	30	3-9	0-0	1-2	2	0	8
Suggs	23	7-15	3-3	2-5	4	1	22
Scrubb	27	4-6	1-2	0-5	1	1	11
K.Harris	24	3-6	2-3	0-0	1	2	8
Bitadze	20	3-7	1-2	2-7	1	0	7
Schofield	18	2-6	2-2	1-3	1	1	7
Carter-Williams	12	1-2	0-0	0-0	3	0	2
Totals	**33-83**		**15-19**	**9-39**	**21**	**11**	**94**

Shooting: Field goals, 39.8%; free throws, 78.9%

Three-point goals: 13-39 (Suggs 5-9, Scrubb 2-2, M.Wagner 2-5, Houstan 2-7, Schofield 1-2, Bol 1-7, Bitadze 0-1, K.Harris 0-3, Okeke 0-3). Team Rebounds: 12. Team Turnovers: 1. Blocked Shots: 9 (Bitadze 2, Okeke 2, Carter-Williams, M.Wagner, Schofield, Scrubb, Suggs). Turnovers: 21 (Bol 4, K.Harris 3, M.Wagner 3, Schofield 3, Scrubb 3, Suggs 2, Bitadze, Houstan, Okeke). Steals: 8 (Okeke 3, Scrubb 2, Houstan, K.Harris, Schofield). Technical Fouls: None.

Cleveland	**33**	**34**	**28**	**23—118**
Orlando	**42**	**15**	**16**	**21— 94**

A—19,235. T—2:02.

Heat 129, 76ers 101

MIAMI

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Butler	29	9-12	5-6	0-3	6	1	24
Strus	24	5-9	0-0	0-1	4	2	14
Adebayo	23	7-11	0-0	4-8	1	0	14
Herro	31	7-17	5-5	0-4	5	0	24
Vincent	21	2-7	0-0	0-2	3	2	5
Martin	35	5-10	2-2	2-7	5	2	13
Lowry	22	4-5	0-0	1-5	7	1	11
Love	19	2-7	1-2	1-6	4	1	7
Highsmith	18	3-4	0-0	2-4	2	2	6
D.Robinson	5	2-3	0-0	0-0	1	0	5
Cain	4	1-1	0-0	0-1	1	1	2
Yurtseven	4	2-2	0-0	0-1	0	1	4
Totals	**49-88**		**13-15**	**10-42**	**39**	**13**	**129**

Shooting: Field goals, 55.7%; free throws, 86.7%

Three-point goals: 18-39 (Herro 5-8, Strus 4-8, Lowry 3-4, Love 2-6, D.Robinson 1-2, Butler 1-3, Vincent 1-3, Martin 1-4, Highsmith 0-1). Team Rebounds: 4. Team Turnovers: 1. Blocked Shots: 0 Turnovers: 10 (Love 3, Highsmith 2, Herro, Martin, Strus, Vincent, Yurtseven). Steals: 3 (Herro, Lowry, Vincent). Technical Fouls: None.

PHILADELPHIA

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Harris	23	4-8	2-2	2-5	2	2	11
Tucker	21	1-2	0-0	1-3	1	1	2
Embiid	30	9-13	2-4	0-6	2	1	21
Harden	27	5-12	2-2	0-4	4	1	14
Melton	21	1-5	0-0	0-4	2	1	3
Milton	26	4-7	3-3	0-2	10	1	11
McDaniels	25	4-8	0-0	0-0	1	4	10
House Jr.	20	2-5	0-0	0-3	1	3	4
Niang	15	3-7	0-0	0-1	0	1	7
Reed	10	1-1	0-0	0-1	0	1	2
Korkmaz	10	3-6	0-0	0-3	0	2	8
Harrell	7	2-2	4-4	0-0	0	0	8
Totals	**39-76**		**13-15**	**3-32**	**23**	**18**	**101**

Shooting: Field goals, 51.3%; free throws, 86.7%

Three-point goals: 10-36 (Korkmaz 2-4, McDaniels 2-5, Harden 2-6, Embiid 1-2, Harris 1-3, Niang 1-4, Melton 1-5, Tucker 0-1, House Jr. 0-3, Milton 0-3). Team Rebounds: 2. Team Turnovers: 2. Blocked Shots: 4 (Embiid 2, Melton, Milton). Turnovers: 15 (Harden 3, Milton 3, Embiid 2, McDaniels 2, Reed 2, Harris, Korkmaz, Niang). Steals: 7 (McDaniels 4, Harris, Niang, Reed). Technical Fouls: 76ers, 6:26 second.

Miami	**41**	**26**	**29**	**33—129**
Philadelphia	**31**	**15**	**32**	**23—101**

A—21,178. T—2:08.

Spurs 129, Trail Blazers 127

PORTLAND

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Butler Jr.	36	4-11	2-2	0-2	4	2	12
Watford	19	7-12	2-2	1-6	3	2	16
Eubanks	27	9-13	2-3	0-9	2	2	23
Mays	22	4-7	2-2	0-2	7	0	11
Williams	31	8-10	0-0	2-4	4	6	16
Minaya	27	3-8	0-0	1-3	1	2	7
Walker	25	4-12	0-0	2-3	2	5	8
Harrison	24	3-8	4-5	1-4	9	3	10
Knox II	23	9-15	3-4	1-3	2	0	24
Totals	**51-96**		**15-18**	**8-36**	**34**	**22**	**127**

Shooting: Field goals, 53.1%; free throws, 83.3%

Three-point goals: 10-28 (Eubanks 3-4, Knox II 3-6, Butler Jr. 2-6, Mays 1-3, Minaya 1-3, Watford 0-1, Williams 0-1, Harrison 0-2, Walker 0-2). Team Rebounds: 15. Team Turnovers: 1. Blocked Shots: 14 (Eubanks 5, Minaya 3, Butler Jr. 2, Harrison, Mays, Walker, Watford). Turnovers: 15 (Knox II 4, Mays 3, Harrison 2, Walker 2, Butler Jr., Minaya, Watford, Williams). Steals: 7 (Butler Jr. 2, Harrison 2, Mays, Minaya, Walker). Technical Fouls: Watford, 8:50 first.

SAN ANTONIO

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Bates-Diop	26	7-11	9-10	1-6	4	1	25
Kel.Johnson	32	10-24	3-3	1-5	4	2	24
Collins	30	9-14	2-3	4-10	4	5	21
Branham	23	1-12	0-0	0-3	0	0	2
Jones	31	5-11	7-7	3-4	10	0	18
Champagnie	25	8-14	3-4	2-5	1	2	24
Mamukelashvili	21	2-8	0-0	4-7	1	0	4
Langford	18	2-5	0-0	2-3	3	1	4
Wesley	16	1-3	0-0	0-2	1	0	2
Barlow	15	2-4	1-1	1-2	1	1	5
Totals	**47-106**		**25-28**	**18-47**	**29**	**12**	**129**

Shooting: Field goals, 44.3%; free throws, 89.3%

Three-point goals: 10-35 (Champagnie 5-9, Bates-Diop 2-4, Collins 1-3, Jones 1-3, Kel.Johnson 1-8, Langford 0-1, Mamukelashvili 0-2, Branham 0-5). Team Rebounds: 12. Team Turnovers: 1. Blocked Shots: 4 (Collins 3, Mamukelashvili). Turnovers: 14 (Langford 3, Champagnie 2, Collins 2, Jones 2, Kel.Johnson 2, Wesley 2, Mamukelashvili). Steals: 9 (Champagnie 2, Mamukelashvili 2, Bates-Diop, Jones, Kel.Johnson, Langford, Wesley). Technical Fouls: None.

Portland	**37**	**24**	**39**	**27—127**
San Antonio	**32**	**37**	**29**	**31—129**

A—16,023. T—2:16.

Thunder 114, Jazz 98

OKLAHOMA CITY

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Dort	19	1-7	3-4	6-8	0	1	5
Jal.Williams	28	4-10	0-0	0-1	5	3	9
Jay.Williams	22	4-8	0-0	2-6	2	2	11
Giddey	35	6-14	3-4	1-8	8	3	17
Gilgus-Alxndr	37	7-19	7-10	2-7	7	3	22
Wiggins	28	5-9	4-4	0-4	3	2	15
Saric	23	5-10	2-2	3-10	1	1	14
Joe	21	3-11	2-2	0-3	3	1	11
Waters III	15	4-7	0-0	3-3	0	1	10
Butler	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Dieng	1	0-2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Mann	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Robinson-Earl	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Sarr	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Totals	**39-97**		**21-26**	**17-50**	**29**	**17**	**114**

Shooting: Field goals, 40.2%; free throws, 80.8%

Three-point goals: 15-45 (Jay.Williams 3-5, Joe 3-9, Saric 2-4, Giddey 2-5, Waters III 2-5, Jal.Williams 1-4, Wiggins 1-4, Gilgeous-Alexander 1-5, Dieng 0-1, Dort 0-3). Team Rebounds: 10. Team Turnovers: 1. Blocked Shots: 2 (Saric 2). Turnovers: 12 (Giddey 4, Dort 2, Jal.Williams 2, Joe 2, Gilgeous-Alexander, Jay.Williams). Steals: 12 (Giddey 3, Wiggins 3, Joe 2, Gilgeous-Alexander, Jay.Williams, Saric, Waters III).

UTAH

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Olynyk	32	6-10	4-6	2-14	8	2	16
Samanic	30	3-8	1-2	0-3	4	4	8
Azubuike	25	6-8	0-0	2-7	0	1	12
Agbaji	30	6-18	1-2	0-1	0	5	13
Dunn	34	9-10	2-2	0-7	8	4	22
Fontecchio	25	4-11	2-2	2-3	0	1	11
Jones	21	2-3	0-0	0-2	0	3	4
Tscno-Andrsn	20	2-9	1-2	0-2	3	2	5
Juzang	15	3-6	0-0	1-3	1	1	7
Potter	4	0-0	0-0	0-3	0	0	0
Totals	**41-83**		**11-16**	**7-45**	**24**	**23**	**98**

Shooting: Field goals, 49.4%; free throws, 68.8%

Three-point goals: 5-31 (Dunn 2-2, Juzang 1-3, Samanic 1-5, Fontecchio 1-6, Olynyk 0-2, Toscano-Anderson 0-5, Agbaji 0-8). Team Rebounds: 5. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 2 (Azubuike, Jones). Turnovers: 19 (Olynyk 7, Dunn 3, Fontecchio 3, Jones 2, Agbaji, Azubuike, Juzang, Toscano-Anderson). Steals: 5 (Dunn, Fontecchio, Jones, Juzang, Olynyk).

Oklahoma City	**32**	**23**	**29**	**30—114**
Utah	**25**	**27**	**24**	**22— 98**

A—18,206. T—2:06.

Suns 119, Nuggets 115

DENVER

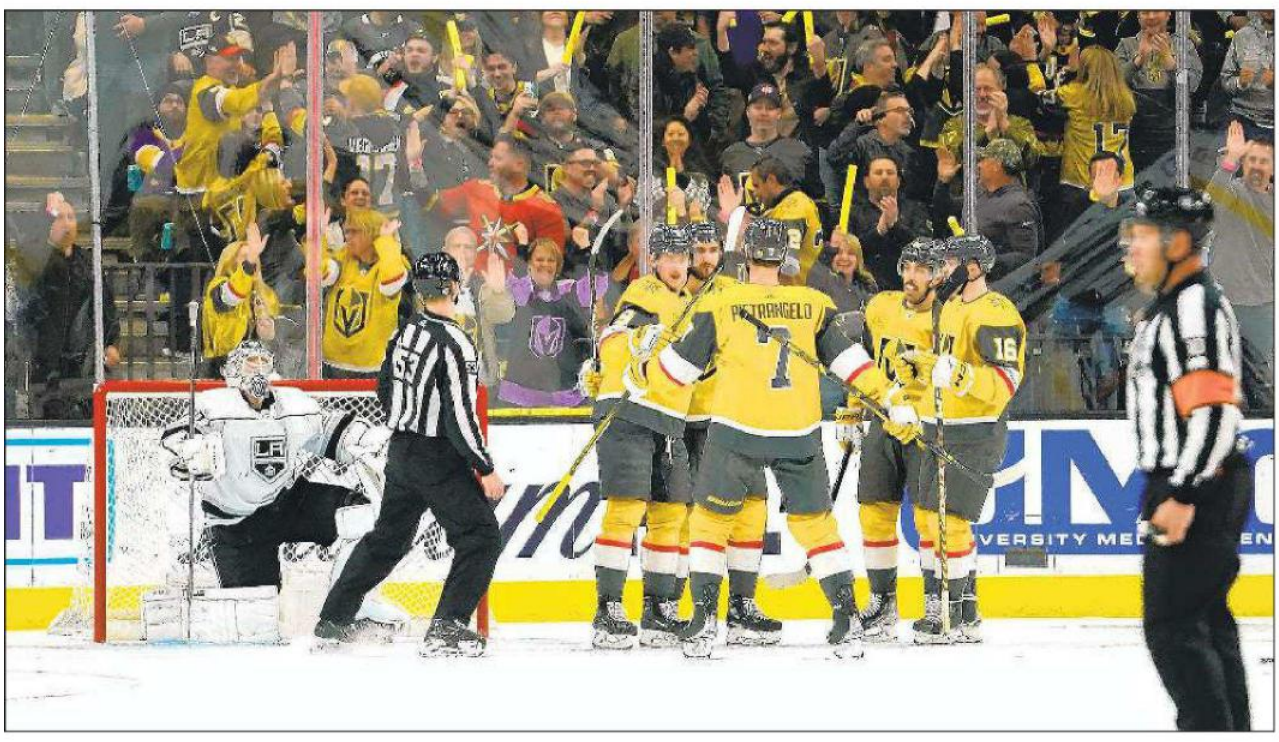
	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Braun	33	6-11	1-2	2-4	3	3	15
Watson	25	1-6	1-2	0-5	2	4	3
Jordan	30	6-6	0-0	3-11	1	1	12
Brown	38	11-18	9-9	3-6	4	1	31
Jackson	30	7-15	4-4	0-3	6	3	20
Smith	22	5-12	1-2	0-3	6	1	11
Green	22	4-7	3-4	0-1	1	0	14
Cancar	20	1-3	0-0	0-3	0	2	2
Nnaji	17	3-5	0-0	1-2	1	4	7
Totals	**44-83**		**19-23**	**9-38**	**24**	**19**	**115**

Shooting: Field goals, 53.0%; free throws, 82.6%

Three-point goals: 8-23 (Green 3-6, Braun 2-5, Jackson 2-5, Nnaji 1-2, Brown 0-1, Smith 0-1, Watson 0-1, Cancar 0-2). Team Rebounds: 9. Team Turnovers: 1. Blocked Shots: 2 (Cancar 2). Turnovers: 12 (Braun 2, Brown 2, Jackson 2, Nnaji 2, Watson 2, Jordan, Smith). Steals: 7 (Braun 2, Cancar 2, Jackson 2, Smith). Technical Fouls: None.

PHOENIX

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Durant	40	9-18	5-7	0-7	4	0	29
Okogie	21	1-4	3-6	1-3	2	1	5
Ayton	31	7-9	2-2	2-5	2	4	16
Booker	37	3-12	8-8	0-1	8	3	15
Paul	37	9-15	0-0	1-6	2	0	25
Craig	22	5-8	0-0	0-3	2	3	11
Ross	15	3-4	0-0	0-3	0	0	8
Biyombo	11	1-3	2-2	2-3	0	1	4
Payne	7	1-2	0-0	0-1	3	2	2
Shamet	7	1-3	0-0	0-0	2	0	2
Landale	5	1-1	0-0	1-1	1	0	2
Wainright	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	2	0
Totals	**41-79**		**20-25**	**



LUCAS PELTIER Associated Press

VEGAS GOLDEN KNIGHTS celebrate after scoring a goal against the Kings during the first period.

Kings routed as Vegas closes in on a top seed

VEGAS 5
KINGS 2

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LAS VEGAS — The Vegas Golden Knights scored four goals on their first six shots and took a major step toward clinching the Pacific Division and the top seed in the Western Conference with a 5-2 victory over the Kings on Thursday night.

The third line shined for the Knights with Phil Kessel, Ivan Barbashev and Chandler Stephenson each finishing with a goal and an assist. Vegas' other two goals came from Nicolas Roy and Jonathan Marchessault.

Laurent Brossoit, competing to be the Knights' starting goalie in the playoffs, made 30 saves and remained unbeaten in regulation this season at 5-0-3.

Anze Kopitar and Vladislav Gavrikov scored for the Kings.

The Knights, 11-2-2 in their past 15 games, have 106 points to lead Edmonton by three and the Kings by six in the Pacific with three games to go.

Vegas also is six points clear of Dallas out of the Central Division.

The Kings appeared to strike first, but Quinton Byfield's goal at 2:33 was challenged by Vegas coach Bruce Cassidy. Officials reviewed the play and ruled the Kings were offside.

The Knights scored just 21 seconds later on Kessel's wraparound. Ivan Barbashev soon after scored off a sensational pass from Stephenson, who about two minutes later scored himself to make it 3-0. The mooring came off the net on Stephenson's goal, but officials ruled after video review the Kings were responsible for it coming off.

Roy's power-play goal with 8:37 left in the first gave the Knights a 4-0 lead within the first 11:23.

Marchessault's goal 1:02 into the second period chased Kings goalie Joonas Korpisalo, who was replaced by Pheonix Copley. Kopitar and Gavrikov answered to bring the Kings to within 5-2 entering the final period.

Copley saved all 22 shots he faced,

Kings center Zack MacEwen was called for boarding Ben Hutton about midway through the second period.

Vegas' Nic Hague responded by going after MacEwen.

MacEwen was handed five-minute majors for boarding and fighting, and Hague was given a 10-minute misconduct penalty, a five-minute major for fighting and a two-minute minor for instigating.

Both teams played at four-on-four for two minutes before the Knights had a man advantage for three minutes. The Knights made the Kings pay on Roy's goal, a rare successful power play. Vegas was two for 21 on the power play in the previous eight games.

The Knights nearly added a second one late in the third, but the play was ruled offsides after a video review.

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 5, KINGS 2

KINGS	0	2	0	2
Vegas	4	1	0	5

FIRST PERIOD: 1. Vegas, Kessel 14 (Barbashev, Stephenson), 2:54. 2. Vegas, Barbashev 16 (Stephenson), 3:56. 3. Vegas, Stephenson 15 (Kessel, Whitecloud), 6:07. 4. Vegas, Roy 14 (Eichel, Pietrangelo), 11:23 (pp). **Penalties**—KINGS bench, served by Kaliyev (Boarding), 8:28. Vegas bench, served by Amadio (Instigator), 8:28. MacEwen, KINGS (Fighting), 8:28. Hague, V (Fighting), 8:28. Hague, V (Instigator), 8:28.

SECOND PERIOD: 5. Vegas, Marchessault 27, 1:02. 6. KINGS, Kopitar 27 (Doughty, Kempe), 11:24 (pp). 7. KINGS, Gavrikov 5, 14:10 (sh). **Penalties**—Barbashev, V (Slashing), 10:55. Durzi, KINGS (Hooking), 13:09.

THIRD PERIOD: Scoring—None. **Penalty**—Kaliyev, KINGS (Holding), 15:48.

SHOTS ON GOAL: KINGS 11-9-12—32. Vegas 13-14-10—37. Power-play conversions—KINGS 1 of 1. Vegas 1 of 4.

GOALIES: KINGS, Copley 24-5-3 (22 shots-22 saves), KINGS, Korpisalo 16-14-4 (15-10). Vegas, Brossoit 5-0-3 (32-30). Att—18,404 (17,367). T—2:38.

NHL STANDINGS

Sixteen teams qualify for the Stanley Cup playoffs. The format is a set bracket that is largely division-based with wild cards. The top three teams in each division will make up the first 12 teams in the playoffs. The remaining four spots will be filled by the next two highest-placed finishers in each conference, based on regular-season record, and regardless of division.

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Pacific	W	L	OL	Pts	GF	GA
x-Vegas	49	22	8	106	264	225
x-Edmonton	47	23	9	103	312	257
x-KINGS	45	24	10	100	269	250
x-Seattle	44	26	8	96	276	245
Calgary	37	27	15	89	256	246
Vancouver	35	36	7	77	266	290
San Jose	22	40	16	60	228	301
DUCKS	23	45	10	56	196	320
Central	**W**	**L**	**OL**	**Pts**	**GF**	**GA**
x-Colorado	47	24	6	100	262	212
x-Dallas	43	21	14	100	271	214
x-Minnesota	44	24	10	98	233	213
Winnipeg	43	32	3	89	235	218
Nashville	40	30	8	88	219	227
St. Louis	37	35	7	81	258	290
Arizona	27	39	13	67	218	286
Chicago	25	47	6	56	190	283

Note: Overtime or shootout losses worth one point.

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Metropolitan	W	L	OL	Pts	GF	GA
x-Carolina	50	19	9	109	251	201
x-New Jersey	50	21	8	108	279	218
x-NY Rangers	46	21	12	104	269	213
NY Islanders	40	30	9	89	233	215
Pittsburgh	39	30	10	88	253	255
Washington	34	35	9	77	242	249
Philadelphia	29	36	13	71	210	261
Columbus	24	46	8	56	206	315
Atlantic	**W**	**L**	**OL**	**Pts**	**GF**	**GA**
z-Boston	61	12	5	127	288	167
x-Toronto	46	21	11	103	263	215
x-Tampa Bay	45	28	6	96	271	243
Florida	41	31	7	89	281	263
Buffalo	38	32	7	83	278	284
Ottawa	37	35	7	81	248	261
Detroit	35	33	10	80	237	259
Montreal	31	42	6	68	225	291

x-clinched playoff berth; z-conference

RESULTS

AT VEGAS 5 KINGS 2	The Golden Knights scored three goals in a span of 3:13 in the first for an easy win in a key Pacific Division game.
AT BOSTON 2 TORONTO 1 (OT)	David Pastrnak scored his 57th goal this season at 2:30 of overtime. Boston's 61 wins are one off the NHL record.
AT FLORIDA 7 OTTAWA 2	Alex Lyon set a franchise record for saves (56) in a regulation game and Aleksander Barkov scored twice.
AT MONTREAL 6 WASHINGTON 2	Joel Armia recorded his second career hat trick and the Canadiens ended a four-game losing streak.
AT NEW JERSEY 8 COLUMBUS 1	Jack Hughes scored two goals and set up two by Timo Meier. It was the most goals for the Devils in four years.
AT PITTSBURGH 4 MINNESOTA 1	Tristan Jarry stopped 27 shots and Pittsburgh kept pace in the race for one of the two wild-card spots in the East.
AT N.Y. ISLANDERS 6 TAMPA BAY 1	New York had a four-goal second period and Ilya Sorokin made 29 saves to keep pace for a wild-card berth.
AT NASHVILLE 3 CAROLINA 0	Mark Jankowski had a goal and an assist, and Juuse Saros made 32 saves for his second shutout this season.
AT ST. LOUIS 3 N.Y. RANGERS 2 (OT)	Kasperi Kapanen scored 1:16 into overtime. Vincent Trocheck had tied it for the Rangers with 2:03 left.
AT DALLAS 4 PHILADELPHIA 1	Jason Robertson beat the first-period buzzer and scored twice as the Stars kept pace in the Central Division race.
AT VANCOUVER 3 CHICAGO 0	Andrei Kuzmenko scored his 37th goal and Thatcher Demko made 33 saves for his first shutout this season.
AT BUFFALO 7 DETROIT 6 (SO)	Tage Thompson scored his 45th goal of the season, the first Buffalo player to reach the mark since 1992-93.
AT SEATTLE 4 ARIZONA 2	The Kraken clinched their first playoff berth, setting an NHL record for wins in an expansion team's second year.
COLORADO 6 AT SAN JOSE 2	Mikko Rantanen scored a hat trick to reach 52 goals this season. Nathan MacKinnon had a goal and three assists.

FRIDAY'S GAMES

No games scheduled

SATURDAY'S GAMES

Colorado at KINGS, 7:30 p.m.	DUCKS at Arizona, 2:30 p.m.
Carolina at Buffalo, 9:30 a.m.	Pittsburgh at Detroit, 10 a.m.
Vegas at Dallas, 12:30 p.m.	Edmonton at San Jose, 1 p.m.
Florida at Washington, 4 p.m.	Montreal at Toronto, 4 p.m.
N.Y. Rangers at Columbus, 4 p.m.	Nashville at Winnipeg, 4 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Ottawa, 4 p.m.	Philadelphia at N.Y. Islanders, 4:30 p.m.
New Jersey at Boston, 5 p.m.	St. Louis at Minnesota, 5 p.m.
Chicago at Seattle, 7 p.m.	Calgary at Vancouver, 7 p.m.

PRO CALENDAR

	FRI 7	SAT 8	SUN 9	MON 10	TUE 11
DODGERS	at Arizona 6:30 SNLA	at Arizona 5 SNLA	at Arizona 1 SNLA	at San Francisco 6:45 SNLA	at San Francisco 6:45 SNLA
ANGELS	TORONTO 6:30 BSW	TORONTO 6 BSSC	TORONTO 1 BSW	WASH. 6:30 BSSC	WASH. 6:30 BSW
LAKERS	PHOENIX 7:30 SpecSN		UTAH 12:30 SpecSN		
CLIPPERS		PORTLAND 1 BSSC	at Phoenix 12:30 BSSC		
KINGS		COLORADO 7:30 BSW		VANCOUVER 7:30 BSW	
DUCKS		at Arizona 2:30 BSW	COLORADO 5:30 TNT		VANCOUVER 7:30 BSSC
GALAXY		at Houston 5:30 Apple TV			
LAFC		AUSTIN 4:45 Ch. 11, Apple TV			VAN.* 7 FS1
ANGEL CITY	APRIL 15 VS. LOUISVILLE, 7 P.M., CBSSN				

Shade denotes home game. *CONCACAF Champions League

TODAY ON THE AIR

TIME	EVENT	ON THE AIR
BASEBALL		
1 p.m.	Seattle at Cleveland	**TV:** MLB
5:30 p.m.	Washington at Colorado	**TV:** MLB
6:30 p.m.	Toronto at Angels	**TV:** BSW **R:** 830, 1220
6:30 p.m.	Dodgers at Arizona	**TV:** SNLA **R:** 570, 1020
BASKETBALL		
5 p.m.	Memphis at Milwaukee	**TV:** NBA
7:30 p.m.	Phoenix at Lakers	**TV:** SpecSN, NBA **R:** 710, 1330
BOXING		
7 p.m.	ShoBox: The New Generation, super-lightweights, Shinard Bunch vs. Bryan Flores	**TV:** Showtime
COLLEGE BASEBALL		
1 p.m.	Nebraska at Michigan	**TV:** Big Ten
4 p.m.	Florida at Tennessee	**TV:** SEC
5 p.m.	Virginia Tech at Duke	**TV:** ACC
6 p.m.	Oklahoma State at Texas Christian	**TV:** ESPNU
7 p.m.	Stanford at California	**TV:** Pac-12
COLLEGE BEACH VOLLEYBALL: PAC-12 NORTH TOURNAMENT		
8 a.m.	Utah vs. Washington	**TV:** Pac-12, Pac-12LA
10 a.m.	California vs. UCLA	**TV:** Pac-12, Pac-12LA
Noon	Utah vs. Arizona	**TV:** Pac-12, Pac-12LA
2 p.m.	UCLA vs. Stanford	**TV:** Pac-12, Pac-12LA
4 p.m.	Oregon vs. USC	**TV:** Pac-12
COLLEGE LACROSSE		
3 p.m.	Michigan at Rutgers	**TV:** ESPNU
3 p.m.	Virginia at North Carolina	**TV:** ACC
4 p.m.	Navy at Loyola (Md.)	**TV:** CBSSN
5 p.m.	Maryland at Ohio State	**TV:** Big Ten
COLLEGE SOFTBALL		
4 p.m.	Florida State at Clemson	**TV:** ESPN2
6 p.m.	Oregon State at UCLA	**TV:** Pac-12LA
GOLF		
Noon	The Masters, second round	**TV:** ESPN, ESPND
HOCKEY		
8 a.m.	IIHF Women's World Championship, U.S. vs. Switzerland	**TV:** NHL
4 p.m.	IIHF Women's World Championship, Czech Republic vs. Canada	**TV:** NHL
HORSE RACING		
Noon	America's Day at the Races	**TV:** BSSC
MIXED MARTIAL ARTS		
7 p.m.	PFL, heavyweights, women's featherweights	**TV:** ESPN2, ESPND
PREP BASKETBALL		
11 a.m.	Girls' State Champions Invitational, Lone Peak (Utah) vs. Desert Vista (Ariz.)	**TV:** ESPNU
1 p.m.	Boys' State Champions Invitational, Sidwell Friends (Washington, D.C.) vs. C. Canyon (Utah)	**TV:** ESPNU
SOCCER		
10 a.m.	Portugal, Porto at Benfica	**TV:** GOLTV
Noon	France, Strasbourg at Lens	**TV:** beIN1, beINes
4:45 p.m.	South American U-17 Championship, Uruguay vs. Brazil	**TV:** FS2
5 p.m.	Ecuador, Cueca at Orense	**TV:** GOLTV
8 p.m.	Mexico, Queretaro at Tijuana	**TV:** ESPND
4:30 a.m. (Sat.)	England, Everton at Manchester United	**TV:** USA
TENNIS		
8 a.m.	WTA Charleston Open, early rounds	**TV:** Tennis
10 a.m.	WTA Charleston Open, quarterfinals	**TV:** Tennis
6 p.m.	WTA Charleston Open, quarterfinals	**TV:** Tennis

Trio tops low-scoring day at Masters

[**Masters,** from B10]
start with a really low round and it gets very difficult, it's kind of easier to protect the score a little bit compared to if you're five, six, seven shots back, it's really difficult to make up that much ground if this place is playing very difficult."

Tiger Woods, four years removed from his fifth Masters victory, frequently winced in pain in his round of 74, his three birdies failing to offset his five bogeys.

Collin Morikawa of La Cañada Flintridge is in a tie for 13th at three under.

It was a brilliant day for U.S. Amateur champion Sam Bennett, who played a bogey-free opening round — the first amateur to do so since 1991 — and is in a cluster at four under that includes defending champion Scottie Scheffler and Xander Schauffele, as well as major winners Shane Lowry and Adam Scott.

"It's been incredible," Bennett said. "Dream come true to be able to tee it up at Augusta playing the Masters. I'm soaking it all in."

An issue that has been percolating for months is the inclusion of LIV Golf players in the field, and Koepka's strong opening round keeps that story line at center stage. But only six of that upstart league's 18 players were under par in the opening round.

"We're still close with these guys, still see them," Koepka said of his friends still on the PGA Tour. "A lot of them down in Jupiter [Fla.], so you see them quite a bit. I mean, nothing new. Probably about maybe 10 guys I just haven't seen or communicated with.

"But everything's been good, man. We're still the same people."

Withdrawing were Will Zalatoris, who suffered two herniated disks in his back last year, and Kevin Na, dealing with an illness.

MATT SLOCUM Associated Press

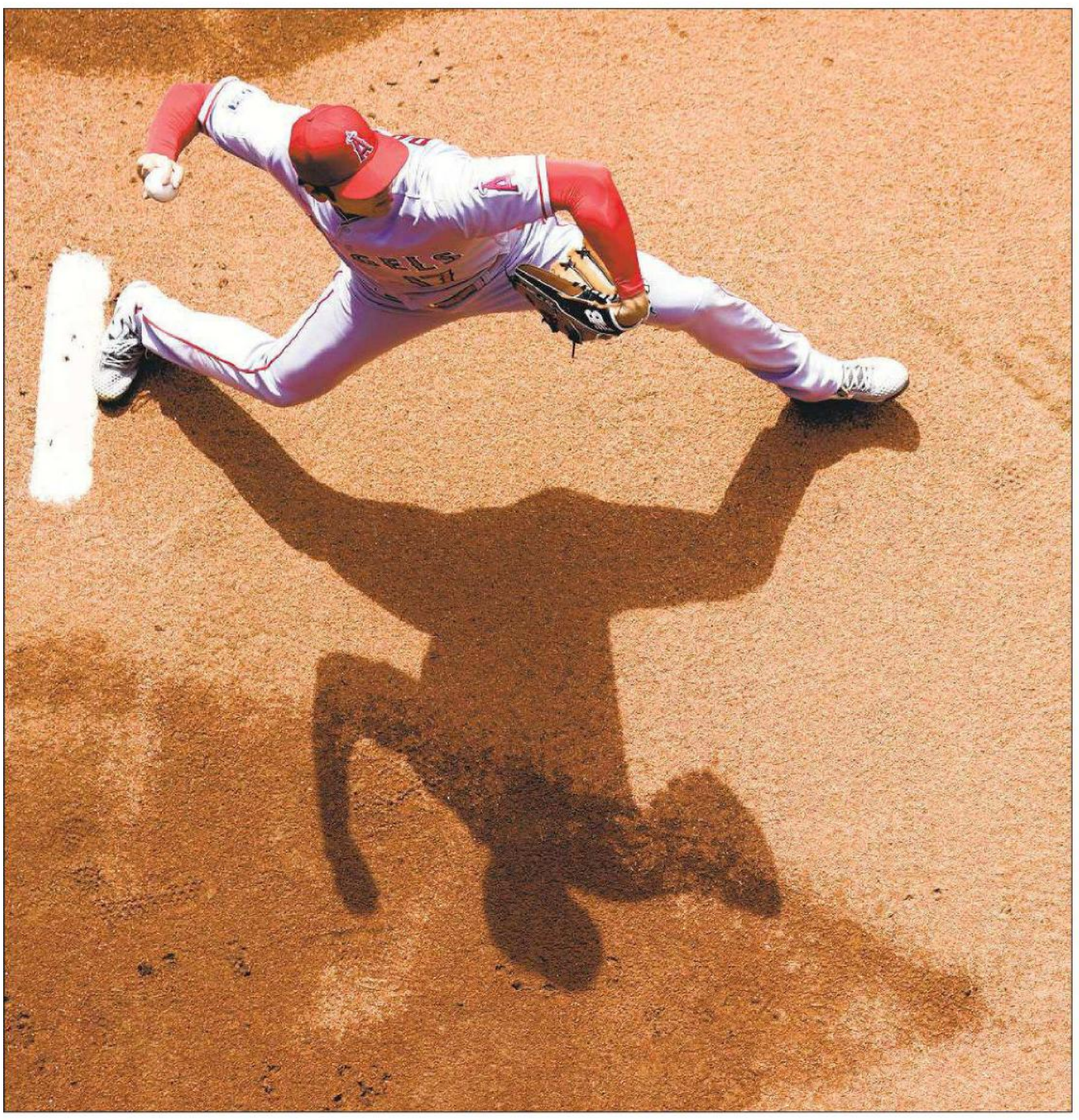
RORY McILROY, left, surveys the green on the sixth hole on his way to an even-par 72 at Augusta National, which is expecting rain that could affect scoring.

$15-MILLION THE MASTERS
At Augusta, Ga.—Par 72
Augusta National Golf Club—7,545 yards
18-hole scores

Viktor Hovland	31-34—65	-7
Brooks Koepka	32-33—65	-7
Jon Rahm	33-32—65	-7
Jason Day	34-33—67	-5
Cameron Young	34-33—67	-5
Sam Bennett	32-36—68	-4
Sam Burns	31-37—68	-4
Shane Lowry	33-35—68	-4
Xander Schauffele	34-34—68	-4
Scottie Scheffler	33-35—68	-4
Adam Scott	34-34—68	-4
Gary Woodland	35-33—68	-4
Tony Finau	35-34—69	-3
Collin Morikawa	34-35—69	-3
Justin Rose	36-33—69	-3
Jordan Spieths	32-37—69	-3
Keegan Bradley	35-35—70	-2
Matt Fitzpatrick	37-33—70	-2
Ryan Fox	36-34—70	-2
Tom Kim	34-36—70	-2
Chris Kirk	38-32—70	-2
Cameron Smith	34-36—70	-2
Scott Stallings	35-35—70	-2
Sepp Straka	39-31—70	-2
Justin Thomas	35-35—70	-2
Patrick Cantlay	35-36—71	-1
Fred Couples	38-33—71	-1
Harris English	37-34—71	-1
Tyrrell Hatton	35-36—71	-1
Max Homa	38-33—71	-1
Sungjae Imorea	35-36—71	-1
Dustin Johnson	36-35—71	-1
Hideki Matsuyama	34-37—71	-1
Phil Mickelson	34-37—71	-1
Joaquin Niemanni	32-39—71	-1
Patrick Reed	35-36—71	-1
Abraham Ancer	39-33—72	E
Tommy Fleetwood	35-37—72	E
Talor Gooch	36-36—72	E
Kevin Kisner	36-36—72	E
Rory McIlroy	37-35—72	E
Francesco Molinari	38-34—72	E
Harold Varner III	34-38—72	E
Mike Weir	35-37—72	E
Corey Conners	36-37—73	+1
Russell Henley	36-37—73	+1
Billy Horschel	36-37—73	+1
Si Woo Kim	37-36—73	+1
Jason Kokrak	38-35—73	+1
Adrian Meronk	35-38—73	+1
Taylor Moore	37-36—73	+1
Seamus Power	35-38—73	+1
Sahith Theegala	37-36—73	+1
Bryson DeChambeaus	38-36—74	+2
Sergio Garcia	34-40—74	+2
Tom Hoge	37-37—74	+2
Kyoung-Hoon Lee	39-35—74	+2
Mito Pereira	39-35—74	+2
Thomas Pieters	37-37—74	+2
J.T. Poston	37-37—74	+2
Charl Schwartzel	38-36—74	+2
Tiger Woods	38-36—74	+2
Ben Carr	38-37—75	+3
Harrison Crowe	36-39—75	+3
Zach Johnson	36-39—75	+3
Kurt Kitayama	38-37—75	+3
Bernhard Langer	38-37—75	+3
Min Woo Lee	36-39—75	+3
Keith Mitchell	37-38—75	+3
Vijay Singh, Fiji	38-37—75	+3
Adam Svensson	41-34—75	+3
Danny Willett	38-37—75	+3
Cameron Champ	41-35—76	+4
Mateo Fernandez de Oliveira	39-37—76	+4
Kazuki Higa	36-40—76	+4
Mackenzie Hughes	39-37—76	+4
Louis Oosthuizenfrica	37-39—76	+4
Brian Harman	39-38—77	+5
Matthew McCleanland	37-40—77	+5
Jose Maria Olazabal	40-37—77	+5
Aldrich Potgieter	40-37—77	+5
Gordon Sargent	39-38—77	+5
Bubba Watson	40-37—77	+5
Alex Noren	41-37—78	+6
Larry Mize	38-41—79	+7
Sandy Lyle	40-41—81	+9
Kevin Na	—withdrew	
Will Zalatoris	—withdrew	

SPORTS

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2023 :: LATIMES.COM/SPORTS



LINDSEY WASSON Associated Press

SHOHEI OHTANI will soon cash in on his abilities as an elite pitcher and hitter. If he hits the free-agent market after this season, it's expected he will command the richest contract in North American professional sports history.

600 million dollar man? It could be Ohtani's price

Angels two-way star will produce record bids in free agency

BY JORGE CASTILLO

Shohei Ohtani added another unprecedented bulletpoint to his resume Wednesday, becoming the first player in Major League Baseball history called for a pitch clock violation as both a pitcher and a batter in the Angels' win over the Seattle Mariners.

It's not the kind of history the star takes the field to make. But it was another subtle reminder of a fact that somehow remains downplayed: Ohtani being an elite two-way player at the big league level is absurd. He is one of the best pitchers and one of the best hitters in the majors. He throws the ball harder, hits the ball farther, and runs faster than almost everybody else. Five years ago, when he arrived from Japan, the thought of such dominance was laughable. Now it's normal.

Soon we'll find out what the industry believes his unparalleled skill set is worth.

Ohtani is slated to become a free agent after this season. Friday's home opener in Anaheim could be the last one with him in an Angels uniform. He'll hit the market at 29 years old, in his prime, expecting to set another record: the richest contract in North American professional sports. At least that's the consensus around the industry, from team executives and agents to coaches and players.

So, how much money will a team commit to Ohtani next winter?

One major league official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because tampering rules forbid him from discussing prospective free agents on other teams, said he believed the bidding would start at $500 million and reach $600 million. One agent predicted Ohtani will sign a 12-year, $600-million deal. Spotrac, a website that focuses on sports contracts, recently revealed contract valuations for Ohtani: Eight years, $230 million as a pitcher and 10 years, $333 million as a hitter. Combined: $563 million.

Mike Trout's 12-year, $426.5-million contract extension is the biggest in major league history. Ohtani should easily eclipse the record of his teammate.

"He's such a unicorn that I don't know

[See **Ohtani,** B7]

Pitch clock brings many challenges, strategies

New rules alter dynamics for pitchers and catchers

BY JORGE CASTILLO

It was the third inning Saturday and Clayton Kershaw needed a moment to collect himself.

The Dodgers were already leading the Arizona Diamondbacks 5-1. But Gabriel Moreno led off the inning for Arizona with a double before taking third base on a fly ball to center field. It was a potential game-changing spot. Kershaw knew what he wanted.

"I was like, 'All right, we need a strikeout here,' " Kershaw recalled from the home dugout at Dodger Stadium on Tuesday.

Various unintended consequences of the pitch clock have surfaced over the first week of the major league baseball season. Everyone at ballparks across the country have been affected — from players and coaches to fans and broadcasters. Some differences are obvious, others are not.

One, momentum within an inning, subtly surfaced for Kershaw on Saturday.

In his first 15 seasons with the Dodgers, Kershaw could have bided his time to prepare for the next encounter with Moreno at third. He could have stalled to analyze the situation, to ponder how to attack Kyle Lewis, just by

[See **Pitch clock,** B6]

Quite plainly, Smith budding Dodgers star

DYLAN HERNÁNDEZ

On the surface, his personality is about as colorful as his name.

Postgame interviews conducted by Will Smith have the feel of court testimonies, his voice monotone, his face exhibiting no emotion.

That was the case again on Tuesday night, after Smith homered for the third consecutive game in the Dodgers' 5-2 victory over the Colorado Rockies at Dodger Stadium.

"I think the hitting coaches do a really good job helping me find my swing really quick and take it to really competitive games," he said.

Smith went on like this for a couple of minutes before he was reminded that scrums like this will become a regular part of his life if he continues hitting the way he

[See **Hernández,** B6]

DODGERS 5, ARIZONA 2

Offense showing two-out clout

L.A. scores all five runs in that situation and hangs on to support solid start by May. **B8**

No title in these Lakers' future

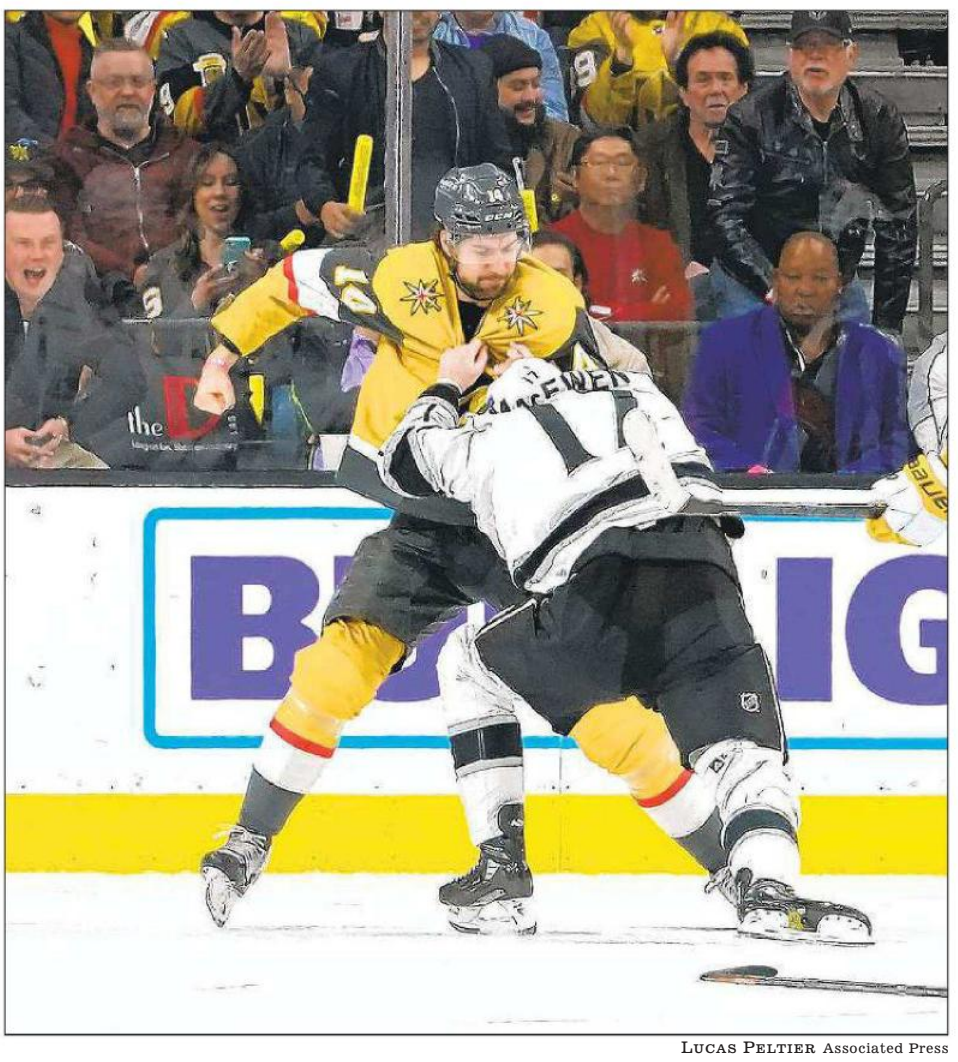
BILL PLASCHKE

After the fireworks smoke had cleared and the giddy shrieking had quieted and every T-shirt had been shot into hungry and sweaty arms, a cluttered Crypto.com Arena was left with a stark and solitary truth. The Lakers are not a championship team.

The feisty Clippers, if they get Paul George back at any point in the playoffs, could possibly make some noise.

But the Lakers? Nah. Not this season. Not after Wednesday night, when they attacked arguably their most emotional game in the history of their hallway rivalry with every ounce

[See **Plaschke,** B8]



LUCAS PELTIER Associated Press

KNIGHTS HAVE UPPER HAND

Kings center Zack MacEwen fights Nicolas Hague in the Golden Knights' 5-2 victory that put Vegas on the cusp of clinching the Pacific Division. **B9**

Rahm stays calm before the storm

He shakes off double and co-leads Masters with rain in forecast. Woods shoots 74.

BY SAM FARMER

AUGUSTA, Ga. — On a day of red numbers and red flags, Jon Rahm got the worst out of the way early.

The world's third-ranked golfer four-putted the first green at the Masters on Thursday for a double-bogey before playing the next 17 holes at nine under par.

That was good enough for a seven-under 65 and a share of the lead with Brooks Koepka and Viktor Hovland under foreboding skies at Augusta National.

"If you're going to make a double or four-putt or anything, it might as well be the first hole, 71 holes to make it up," said Rahm, who hit every fairway and 17 of 18 greens. "After that, it was more, I was focused on the fact that all the strokes were good. The reads were good. The roll was good."

The Masters

FIRST-ROUND LEADERS
Augusta National G.C.
Augusta, Ga.
Par 72 | 7,545 yards

	Out	In	Total	
Koepka	32	33	65	-7
Hovland	31	34	65	-7
Rahm	33	32	65	-7
Day	34	33	67	-5
Young	34	33	67	-5
Other notables				
Spieth	32	37	69	-3
McIlroy	37	35	72	E
Woods	38	36	74	+2

Cameron Young and Jason Day were two shots off the lead in one of the better opening-round scoring days in Masters history.

Cooler temperatures are in the forecast, as is rain, which would make potential comebacks even more difficult.

"Obviously we don't know how bad it's going to get, but I tend to think that it's easier to make up some ground on the easier days," Hovland said. "So if you

[See **Masters,** B9]

Los Angeles Times

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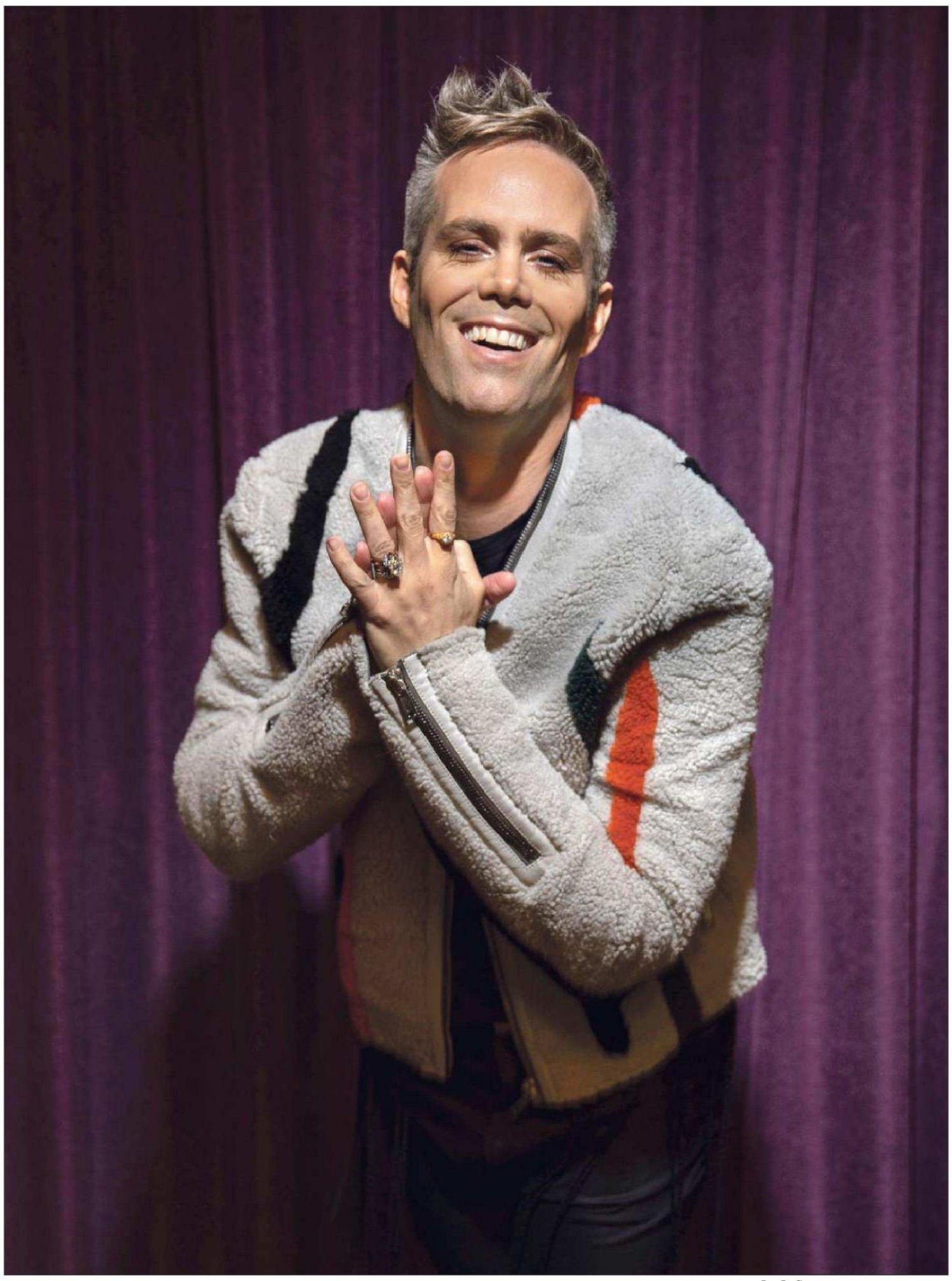

Jay L. Clendenin Los Angeles Times

JUSTIN TRANTER, who's written songs for Miley Cyrus, Justin Bieber and more, turns their talents to the new "Grease" show.

THINKING 'PINK'

Hitmaker Justin Tranter flashed back to the 1950s to co-write 30 songs for a progressive prequel series about 'Grease's' girl gang

MIKAEL WOOD
POP MUSIC CRITIC

To capture the sound of the 1950s, the creators of a new "Grease" prequel turned to one of the key figures of 2000s pop.

Known for writing hit singles for the likes of Justin Bieber ("Sorry"), Selena Gomez ("Hands to Myself"), DNCE ("Cake by the Ocean") and Imagine Dragons ("Believer"), Justin Tranter is the executive music producer of "Grease: Rise of the Pink Ladies," a 10-episode series that premiered Thursday on Paramount+. The show, which takes place in 1954, depicts the formation of the Rydell High girl gang ruled by Stockard Channing's Rizzo in the blockbuster 1978 movie starring John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John. Tranter, who identifies as gender-nonconforming and uses they/them pronouns, co-wrote 30 original tunes that trick out the era's signature styles with modern production touches and clever lyrical asides.

"This was by far the hardest thing I've ever done," said the 42-year-old, who first found an audience as frontperson of the glam-punk band Semi Precious Weapons. Yet Tranter couldn't resist what they view as the series' nuanced treatment of gender, race and sexuality. The Grammy-nominated songwriter, whose recent pop credits include songs by Miley Cyrus and Chappell Roan, spoke about "Grease," TikTok and the state of the music industry at their home in Hancock Park. [See **Tranter,** E2]

How to adapt advice column

Liz Tigelaar charted a path that included Cheryl Strayed in the TV writers room.

By Yvonne Villarreal

Dear Sugar, how do I respectfully take ownership of a source of material that was created by another writer and has a community of admirers who feel a really strong sense of connection to the work?

It was the question Liz Tigelaar, a writer and producer whose credits include "Little Fires Everywhere" and "Casual," wishes she could have posed as she set out to adapt a book of essays based on Cheryl Strayed's beloved online advice column.

Strayed began writing the column under the pseudonym "Dear Sugar" more than a decade ago when she was a struggling writer. She developed a loyal following by dispensing insightful and compassionate guidance on life's hard,

[See **Tigelaar,** E6]

THEATER REVIEW

Potent 'Spider' weaves magic

Author's dramatic adaptation of his novel enthralls at A Noise Within.

CHARLES McNULTY
THEATER CRITIC

Manuel Puig's "Kiss of the Spider Woman" is perhaps best known in the U.S. as the film that won William Hurt an Oscar for flouncing around a prison cell in a kimono.

But this 1985 movie sprang from a 1976 novel. And that novel also gave rise to a play, which the Argentine author adapted himself. A musical was subsequently spawned, offering more proof of the material's imaginative hold.

The drama, a two-character work, strips the story to its essence. The actors must supply all the narrative magic through the contact they make with each other onstage.

On one level, the play is about political prisoners.

[See **'Kiss,'** E2]

COMMENTARY

Finally, she gets a turn

In 'The Super Mario Bros. Movie,' Princess Peach is no longer just the damsel in distress.

By Tracy Brown

In my earliest memories of Princess Peach, she is less a video game character than an elusive goal.

I must have been 5 or 6 when my parents got my siblings and me a Nintendo for Christmas: old enough to be excited for a video game console, but young enough that any game — including "Super Mario Bros." — was an impossible challenge.

Still, I eventually made it through that dark and intimidating castle stage at the end of the game's first world, where a curious mushroom-like being thanks you for the rescue but informs you "our princess is in another castle." Introduced to U.S. gamers as Princess Toadstool, she was never in any of the castles I could make it through on my own back then.

In "The Super Mario Bros. Movie," though, the princess is in the very first castle Mario enters. Flipping the script on their traditional video game dynamic, in the film, now in theaters, it's Mario that needs Peach's help, and the beloved ruler is a guide and formidable ally rather than the kidnapped damsel in distress.

Created by master game designer Shigeru Miyamoto for the first "Super Mario Bros." (1985), Princess Peach has often been relegated to the role of catalyst, launching Mario's adventures in the core games of the series. Though there have been some outliers, the "Super Mario" formula is simple: Peach gets kidnapped and Mario has to save her.

[See **Princess,** E6]

Nintendo / Illumantion Entertainment / Universal Studios

PRINCESS PEACH, played by Anya Taylor-Joy, is the one doing the saving now in "The Super Mario Bros. Movie." Toad, voiced by Keegan-Michael Key, left.

Progressive pop and 'Pink Ladies'

EDUARDO ARAQUEL Paramount+

TRICIA FUKUHARA, from left, Marisa Davila, Cheyenne Wells and Ari Notartomaso star in "Grease: Rise of the Pink Ladies." Justin Tranter praises the prequel series' nuanced treatment of gender, race and sexuality.

'Grease: Rise of the Pink Ladies'

Where: Paramount+
When: Anytime
Rating: TV-14 (may be unsuitable for children under the age of 14)

[**Tranter,** from E1]

Why did you want to get involved in the "Grease" franchise?

There's a a two-part answer. First, musical theater is the reason I got into music. I was convinced I was Annie and was very upset when I auditioned and got the role of Bert Healy instead. It was a travesty — the gender binary of it all! But the second part of the answer is that I read [creator and showrunner] Annabel Oakes' script, which struck that perfect balance of feeling important but also like a f— blast.

Important in what way?

There's a song in Episode 2 where the character Jane, who becomes the leader of the Pink Ladies, sings about wanting more. She keeps getting in trouble because she just wants more than a young woman should want. And I relate to that as a queer person. Like, how dare I want more?

Why has "Grease" proven so durable as a piece of intellectual property?

The songs are perfect — especially with the movie, where you have the original songs from the [1971] stage version and then you have the pop songs that Olivia Newton-John's main writer [John Farrar] wrote. My parents were big rock 'n' roll fans — we're pretty sure my brother was conceived at a Fleetwood Mac show — but they weren't movie musical fans. But the "Grease" songs were such big hits that you couldn't not hear them.

How was it working with musical theater voices as opposed to pop voices?

"Grease" isn't really about musical theater singing for the most part. I mean, Olivia Newton-John is one of the greatest pop voices of all time, right? I put her in my top three — just the most crystal, magical tone in history. One of the singers we got — Ari Notartomaso, who plays Cynthia — everything we could find online was basically her singing Barbra Streisand covers with a lesbian twist. But I was like, the voice is so good, I don't care if it's musical theater. Then we got them in the booth to do "New Cool," which is our modern flip on "Greased Lightnin'," and they're the best rock singer I've ever heard.

Thirty songs is a lot. Were you close to running out of gas at any point?

I do lots of things when writing, but lyrics are my true passion. And the hardest part of that is figuring out what to talk about. Most pop songs are about four things: falling in love, f—, breaking up and what I do with Imagine Dragons, which is just sort of like ... vague inspiration. In a musical, what you talk about is all there — it's plot, it's character. The only thing to run out of was references so that we weren't repeating ourselves with the same '50s nostalgia. Like, you can't put every song in 6/8.

How does Hollywood compare to the music business?

There's a lot more money in TV than there is in music, which means there's a lot more people involved. To get a pop song onto an album or to be a single, the people that have to say yes are the artist, the A&R, the manager and, if they're a massive artist, then the chairperson of the label. In TV, 43 people have to approve everything. But luckily I love people. And I know this sounds crazy, but I love a Zoom meeting. Let's talk about it!

In addition to songwriting, you also run a publishing company and a record label. Which of those roles most excites you?

It kind of changes, depending on the day or the week. I'm actually enjoying writing pop songs again. I really needed to focus on "Grease" and a couple other film and TV things I did because ... I wasn't burning out, but I was just like, "How many different ways can I figure out how to do those four things that pop songs are about?" So I went and did things that were really hard and then came back to pop music and was like, "Oh, thank God — I can do this in an hour."

As a songwriter, are you competitive?

Yes. I hate it. I've muted almost everyone on Instagram who's also a songwriter or producer, and I've muted every charts account.

Why is it bad for you to look at the charts?

Because it doesn't make my art better.

For years and years, I wrote 12 songs a week because of a need for survival after being dropped from four record deals. I was living in a two-bedroom house with six people in West L.A., which is now looking pretty cute but at the time was just this weird street surrounded by a Bed Bath & Beyond. So I had this need to prove that I could make music that the whole world heard.

Competition then was helpful — it was motivating. Now that I'm lucky that I don't have to do that, competition just feels negative.

Are you optimistic about the state of pop music right now?

I think it's iconic because it's a f— disaster. I don't mean the music — there's some great music. SZA is a massive pop star. Like, we have a genius among us. But the business is a disaster. I have label presidents saying to me, "We don't know how to break artists anymore." But for young people, it's so cool. You could literally get yourself a hit song from your bedroom.

What's an out-of-nowhere hit from the last year or two that excited you?

The song with Ice Spice and PinkPantheress ["Boy's a liar Pt. 2"]. If that song had to go through the traditional systems, no way.

Or Raye's "Escapism." I worked with her years ago, when she was on a label in the U.K. She did everything the label asked, and they dropped her. Then she puts out a song where nothing in the chorus repeats, and it's a global smash.

Does that threaten you as a professional hitmaker?

I don't feel threatened. But I'm the outsider of the group. There are a couple of other queer hitmakers, but I still come from a much more alternative space than they do. I'm sure some of the more traditional hitmakers are terrified right now.

Do you worry that TikTok is creating a generation of one-hit wonders? That nobody's thinking about building a long-term career?

That's nothing new. Look at the Disney kids. Some of them figured out how to have music careers, some of them didn't. But they all got record deals. It just feels crazy right now because it's happening so much faster.

Is pop moving in a good direction in regards to gender and sexuality?

We're moving in an amazing direction. What Sam Smith has accomplished with "Unholy," and bringing Kim Petras along on it — if that's not progress, I don't know what is. And it's driving people crazy! Total moral panic, which is so lovely.

Do you find that the industry is becoming more inclusive?

In ways. We always think that Hollywood and the record business are like, "Oh, this is trending — let's go get more." But if we really break down the charts and really break down the TV shows getting made and the movies getting made, it's still always the same thing.

Did they make more gay shows after "Will & Grace"? They sure didn't. Most of my film and TV meetings, it's: "We can't sell queer content right now — we lose half the country."

With Kim having a huge hit, we have someone who's been out in their identity since they started, which is a huge step forward. But I haven't heard of any other trans girls getting signed on the back of it.

Potent, intimate take on 'Kiss of the Spider Woman'

CRAIG SCHWARTZ

ED F. MARTIN, left, and Adrián González star in "Kiss of the Spider Woman."

'Kiss of the Spider Woman'

Where: A Noise Within, 3352 E. Foothill Blvd., Pasadena
When: 7:30 p.m. Thursdays, 8 p.m. Fridays, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays. Ends April 23
Cost: $25 and up
Info: (626) 356-3100 or *www.anoisewithin.org*
Running time: 1 hour, 45 minutes

['Kiss,' from E1]

But on another, it is about something more universal — the human need for companionship, understanding and love. For mutuality as well as for dignity and respect.

The spell cast by the revival of "Kiss of the Spider Woman" at A Noise Within in Pasadena doesn't shoot many sparks early on. But the production, directed by Michael Michetti, builds in potency, ultimately ensnaring its audience in the time-tested tale.

Set in a Buenos Aires prison, the drama sets up a political odd couple. Molina (Ed F. Martin), a gay window dresser arrested on a morals charge, escapes harsh reality through the fantasy of movies. Valentin (Adrián González), a straight Marxist, thinks only of his revolutionary mission.

The men could hardly be more different, but a repressive political regime makes for strange bedfellows.

Molina struts and frets like a South American Blanche DuBois, albeit one with a maternal streak. He shares his food with Valentin, fussing over his cellmate and tending to him when he's sick.

Valentin grows impatient with Molina's frivolity, his fundamental lack of seriousness. And he loathes what he perceives as homosexual abjection. But he can't help responding to Molina's kindness and generosity.

A curious tenderness develops between the cellmates, who begin to take in the humanity of each other that their society has denied. Living side by side in confinement, they come to depend on each other for psychological sustenance. Their unexpected friendship expands their identities and chips away at the stereotypes that have been cruelly imposed on them.

Valentin rolls his eyes at Molina's romanticism, although slowly but surely he begins to acknowledge a place in his ideology for love. What's more, his tightly wound masculinity begins to loosen as he sees the effect of an oppressive system on someone he comes to care about deeply.

Molina, who's caught up in a prison conspiracy, has the opportunity to discover what matters to him beyond the creature comforts he has relied on to dull the pain of his existence. He may adopt a craven facade, but there's courage waiting to be tapped.

Under Michetti's direction, the actors are permitted to make the characters their own. Martin doesn't overplay Molina's flamboyance. He minces, but modestly. His Molina knows how dangerous it is to call undue attention to himself, even as he makes no effort to conform to traditional gender expectations.

González endows Valentin with a modern masculinity. The character's machismo flares up, but there's an enlightened compassion that's never out of sight.

To entertain Valentin, Molina fancifully retells the plot of Val Lewton's 1942 film "Cat People." He's spinning a plot to pique Valentin's interest, but these moments are bloodless onstage. Martin has trouble bringing the movie to life, and González's excitement can't help seeming pushed.

The production is more vivid when the actors are interacting with the tangible objects of the prison cell, which is artfully arrayed by scenic designer Tesshi Nakagawa.

The set, strategically situated to enhance the audience's sense of proximity, is at once painterly and stark, picturesque and dingy. Jared A. Sayeg's lighting and Robert Oriol's sound design facilitate the shifts between claustrophobia and intimacy.

Sheets, towels, pans and cups become an extension of the dialogue. These items are precious to the characters, and the actors impart to them the necessary emotional significance.

Perhaps the most moving scene in the production is when Martin's Molina tends to González's Valentin, who has soiled himself after becoming violently ill. Molina assesses how he can best provide comfort and cleanliness with the supplies at hand. Valentin, utterly helpless, allows himself to be nurtured by a man.

There's something heroic in the domestic command that Molina summons in a situation that might naturally provoke disgust. But Molina and Valentin are no longer strangers to each other. Their deepening relationship, beautifully traced on A Noise Within's stage, turns a political hell into a provisional sanctuary.

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1:10 4:20 7:20
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1:00 7:10
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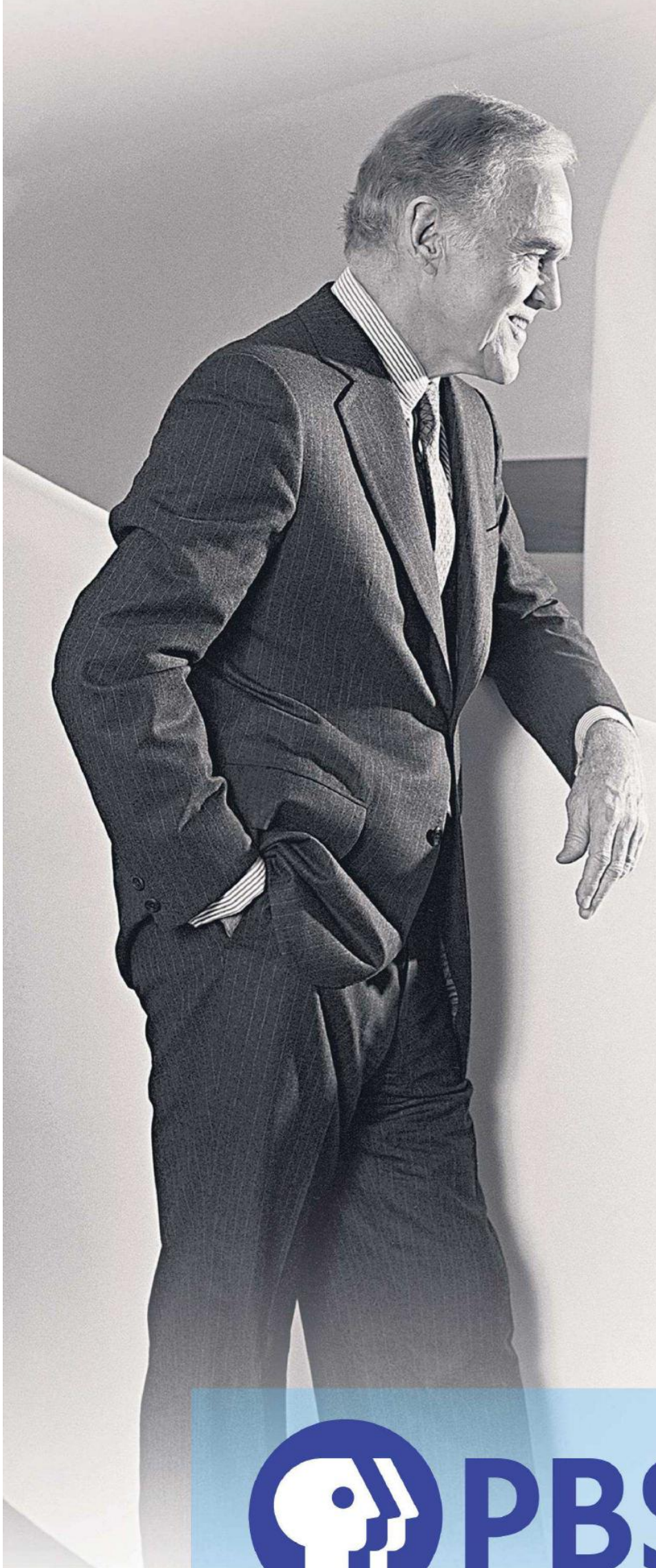

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6	2	3	1	4	5
4	1	5	3	6	2
1	5	2	6	3	4
3	4	6	5	2	1
2	6	1	4	5	3
5	3	4	2	1	6

4/7/23

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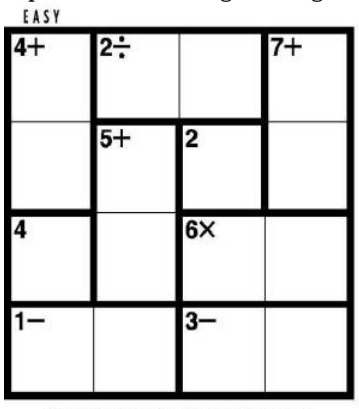
Solutions to Thursday's puzzles

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 or 2-by-3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 (or 1 to 6 for the smaller grid). For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit *www.sudoku.org.uk*.

KENKEN

Every box will contain a number; numbers depend on the size of the grid. For a 6x6 puzzle, use Nos. 1-6. Do not repeat a number in any row or column. The numbers in each heavily outlined set of squares must combine to produce the target number found in the top left corner of the cage using the mathematical operation indicated. A number can be repeated within a cage as long as it is not in the same row or column.

EASY



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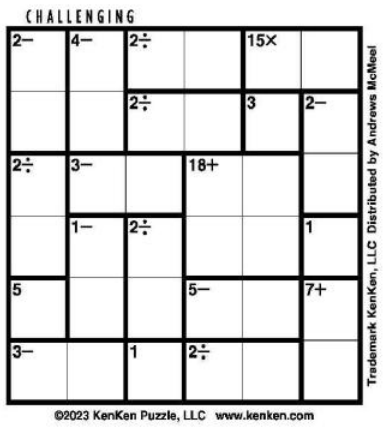
CHALLENGING



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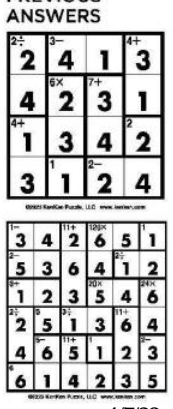
PREVIOUS ANSWERS



4/7/23

HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis

Aries (March 21-April 19): Today's organization will lead to tomorrow's action. Make your list.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): The best way to get the job done is through teamwork. It will involve some amount of taking turns.

Gemini (May 21-June 21): There's hardly a situation that can't be improved by levity. Spend time with goofballs and children of all ages.

Cancer (June 22-July 22): What's the difference between a shelter and a cage? Access to an unlocked door. You'll check for such a door.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): While there are certainly instances that call for justice, many minor infringements are best ignored.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Consider why you feel the need to take control of the situation. Is it worth your attention?

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): Some admire you for your work ethic. Others sympathize, as it seems you do more than your fair share. If they knew the satisfaction you found in your work, they would be jealous.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): It's flattering when someone wants you all to themselves, but you'll be happier when you give your attention to many.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You'll get in touch with your own preferences. Taste is knowing what you like and why.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You care about what your friend cares about. Maybe you have no genuine interest beyond the fact that it matters to your friend; this is what selfless support looks like.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You sense things and pretend you didn't. It takes experience, maturity and a lot of paying attention to honor invisible boundaries.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): Though you often know the right thing to say in a moment, you more often recognize where the silence goes.

Today's birthday (April 7): Carefree moments will be sprinkled like an exciting spice over your year, enough to sparkle up the flavor without changing the dish. You'll often be around people you genuinely care about and your leadership qualities flow. You're constantly making things better for others. More highlights: You'll learn from the ideal role model. A financial restructuring has you living with more ease. You'll fit right in with a talented group and create something beautiful together. Taurus and Libra adore you. Your lucky numbers: 2, 7, 12, 10 and 30.

Mathis writes her column for Creators Syndicate Inc. The horoscope should be read for entertainment.

CROSSWORD

Edited By Patti Varol and Joyce Nichols Lewis

By Ella Dershowitz

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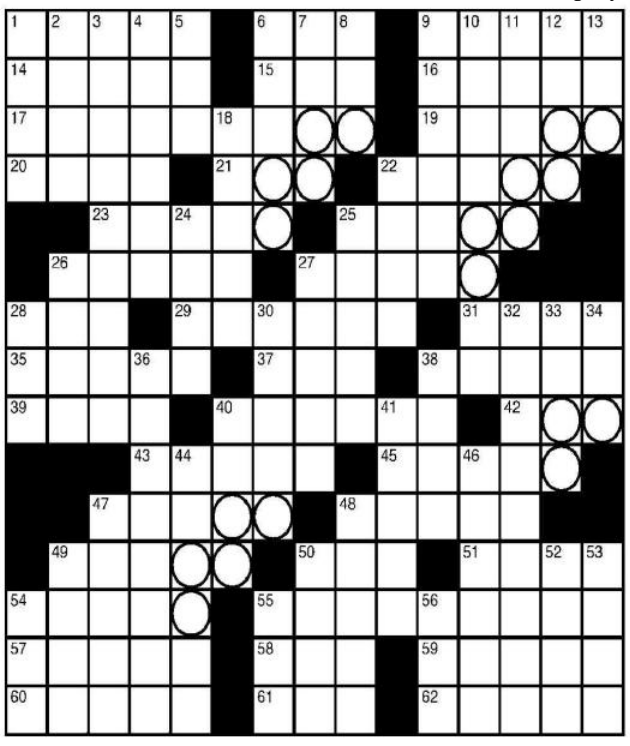

ACROSS

1 Home of the College World Series
6 Many Chrome runners
9 Dog breed of Tokyo's Hachiko statues
14 Cars sold at auction
15 Barrel wood
16 Western Wyoming county
17 Giddy
19 Urban Dictionary content
20 "Big __" Delaney: "Sons of Anarchy" character
21 Common toothbrush holder
22 Pop music's __ Vanilli
23 Fritterlike side with fried catfish
25 Emblems
26 "Ditto"
27 "La La Land" Oscar nominee
28 __ milk
29 Recruit with arm-twisting
31 Butter used in saag paneer
35 Haggler's concern
37 Cupcake
38 Past potentates
39 Qdoba snack
40 Con artist?
42 On
43 In the running
45 Blue Apron offering
47 Indiana state flower
48 "Stayin' Alive" genre
49 Any "Gilmore Girls" episode, now
50 Cartoon still
51 Silly fool
54 Roomba target
55 Tiny units of progress depicted four times in this puzzle?
57 Mid-pirouette, say
58 Blue-__: pain relief brand
59 Fine-tune
60 Origin of the street food koshary
61 Freelancer's job
62 Swimming holes

DOWN

1 Guesstimate phrase
2 Cheesy diner fare
3 Not engaged
4 "We're here!"
5 Cigar end
6 __ shop
7 Photographer Kristin
8 Pie in the __
9 Part of an online tag
10 Breakfast brand
11 Emphatic letters, for short
12 Singer Braxton
13 Filmmaker Lee
18 Allergy season sound
22 Complain
24 Feeling yesterday's yoga class, perhaps
25 Full of beans
26 Name before Wilson or after Rooney
27 Corp. shake-up
28 Go (for)
30 Full of beans
32 Time for a costume from a boo-tique?
33 "Black Panther" villain Killmonger
34 Contractor's fig.
36 Spy mission
38 Cinco menos dos
40 Wolfhard of "Stranger Things"
41 "Revenge" star VanCamp
44 "No doubt about it!"
46 What many modern plays lack
47 Annoying
48 Correct coding errors, say
49 Ladder part
50 Tank
52 Streaming device
53 Judgy syllables
54 Generic surname
55 "I __ to differ"
56 Indy brand

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

P	A	G	E	S	■	M	A	Y	A	■	A	W	O	L
A	R	E	P	A	■	A	M	E	R	I	C	A	N	A
P	A	T	S	Y	■	N	O	S	E	D	I	V	E	S
A	L	S	O	■	G	I	S	■	Y	O	D	E	L	S
■	■	E	M	A	I	L	■	A	O	L	■	■	■	■
M	A	R	■	E	V	A	■	J	U	S	T	C	U	Z
E	M	I	G	R	E	■	T	A	J	■	B	O	N	O
D	I	O	N	■	M	U	N	R	O	■	A	M	M	O
A	G	U	A	■	E	M	T	■	K	A	R	E	E	M
L	A	S	T	L	A	P	■	S	I	P	■	O	T	S
■	■	■	A	B	S	■	E	N	R	O	N	■	■	■
R	A	T	E	D	R	■	P	I	G	■	H	D	T	V
I	M	A	L	L	E	A	R	S	■	A	G	O	R	A
L	E	M	M	E	A	T	E	M	■	W	E	W	O	N
E	S	S	O	■	K	E	Y	S	■	L	E	N	D	S

4/7/23

BRIDGE

By Frank Stewart

Unlucky Louie attracts adversity like a slice of bread is prone to mold.

As South in a penny game at my club, Louie leaped to six hearts at his third turn. (North's cue bid of five clubs, going beyond game when he had no help in diamonds, was bold.) West led the king of clubs to dummy's ace.

Louie saw that if trumps broke no worse than 3-1, he could draw them all, then hope to run the diamonds to discard dummy's remaining clubs and ruff at least one club. But when he led a trump at Trick Two, East discarded. Louie could still pick up the trumps but had to spend all of dummy's trumps. He lost two clubs.

"If I were a restaurant," Louie sighed, "the health department would shut me down." Louie makes the slam with foresight. He ruffs a spade at the second trick and takes the ace of trumps. He can then continue thus: trump to dummy's eight, spade ruff with the queen, trump to the 10. He draws West's last trump with the king and runs the diamonds for 12 tricks.

You hold: ♠ 9 7 5 3 ♥ J 9 5 2 ♦ 8 5 ♣ K Q J. Your partner opens one diamond, you respond one heart and he bids two clubs. What do you say?

Answer: If you held 9 7 5 3, J 9 5 2, K J, A 5 4, you could reasonably return to two diamonds, both to play at the probable 5-2 trump fit and to preserve the chances of reaching game. With the actual hand, pass. To bid two diamonds might work, but the hand is so weak I would be reluctant to give partner another chance.

South dealer
N-S vulnerable

NORTH
♠ K J 4
♥ K 10 8 4
♦ 10 9 4
♣ A 6 4

WEST
♠ 9 7 5 3
♥ J 9 5 2
♦ 8 5
♣ K Q J

EAST
♠ A Q 10 8 6 2
♥ None
♦ J 6 3
♣ 9 7 5 2

SOUTH
♠ None
♥ A Q 7 6 3
♦ A K Q 7 2
♣ 10 8 3

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♦	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♥	All Pass		

Opening lead – ♣ K

Tribune Content Agency

ASK AMY

Attraction just isn't there

Dear Amy: I have met a number of friends online, especially since COVID. One of these friends is a guy I became attracted to.

He makes me laugh, he's kind, and I genuinely have a good time talking to him. Although we had been friends for the better part of a year, our communication was only over text. While he had seen photos of me, I had no idea what he looked like.

Well, we finally video chatted last night, and I have no attraction to him at all. I tried convincing myself that the lack of attraction wasn't a big deal, but I couldn't do it. There's nothing wrong with the way he looks, he's just a lot older than I thought and drastically different from what I pictured. I feel like a terrible person and have been berating myself all day.

How dare I suddenly dislike this wonderful guy who I had a great connection with over such a tiny reason? I also feel embarrassed for having gotten my emotions involved without knowing anything about him.

I don't want to hurt him, especially since the reason behind it is so petty and would be so harmful if he knew. Am I a terrible woman?

Prospecting

Dear Prospecting: This dynamic is the very reason I push for in-person (or video) meeting as soon as possible, when people are crushing online.

You aren't being petty; you aren't being terrible; you're being human. Have you never experienced a soft rejection because of a lack of attraction? This is a common and awkward experience for anyone brave enough to swim in the dating pool.

You're already friends with this man. Now that you've de-crushed, you should guide this relationship back into the friend zone.

Dear Amy: I'm nearing the end of high school. My folks are asking about my graduation plans.

I've always made it clear that I would not walk at the graduation ceremony. My family seems to assume I've had a change of heart, but the thought of attending still makes me deeply uncomfortable.

For some context, I haven't attended other nonessential school events, (prom, sports events, etc). While I do understand that graduation is an important milestone for some, it isn't in my case: I will go on to undergrad in the same town with many of the same people from my high school.

I really do not want my reluctance to go to the graduation ceremony to escalate into "a thing" and cause more conflict. Am I being petulant? Should I stick to my guns, or just suck it up?

Ungrateful Grad

Dear Ungrateful: When given the choice, I always vote for "stick to your guns," unless the other choice is to "suck it up" when doing so is a possibility of a relatively brief duration.

I understand and respect your choice over the years to skip events that you know you wouldn't enjoy.

However, at this juncture, one thing to keep in mind is that graduation is not for you; it's for your parents. They don't care about prom, games and school plays. They might care very much about graduation.

Perhaps you could offer your folks a compromise and find another significant way to mark the occasion that you can enjoy as a family. They want to congratulate you and I hope you'll let them.

Email questions to Amy Dickinson at *askamy@amydickinson.com*.

FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane

4-7
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Dist. by King Features Synd.
www.familycircus.com
By and JEFF KEANE
"The day before today was yesterday. Tomorrow is nexterday."

DENNIS THE MENACE By Hank Ketcham

REPLY ALL LITE By Donna Lewis

MARMADUKE By Brad & Paul Anderson

BLISS By Harry Bliss

SPEED BUMP By Dave Coverly

COMICS

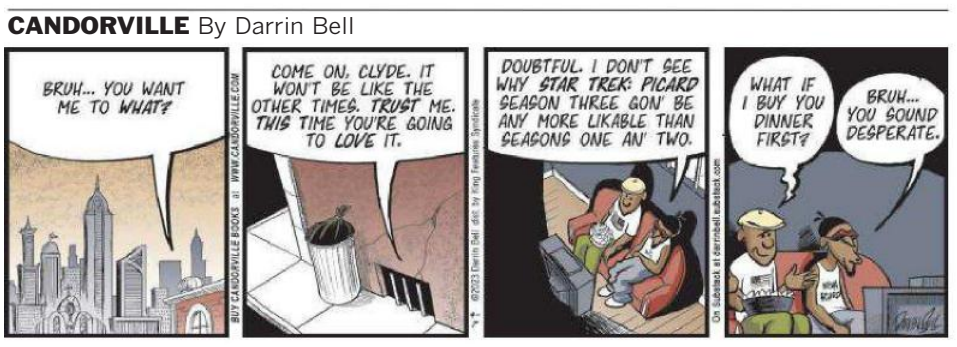
LA CUCARACHA By Lalo Alcaraz

AND ANOTHER BIDEN BANK COLLAPSES... IT REMINDS ME OF MY OWN BANK'S FAILURE.
ERNESTO, YOU NEVER HAD A BANK.
IT'S YOUR BANK, TOO!
WE PUT MONEY IN NETO, AND IT JUST DISAPPEARS.
?

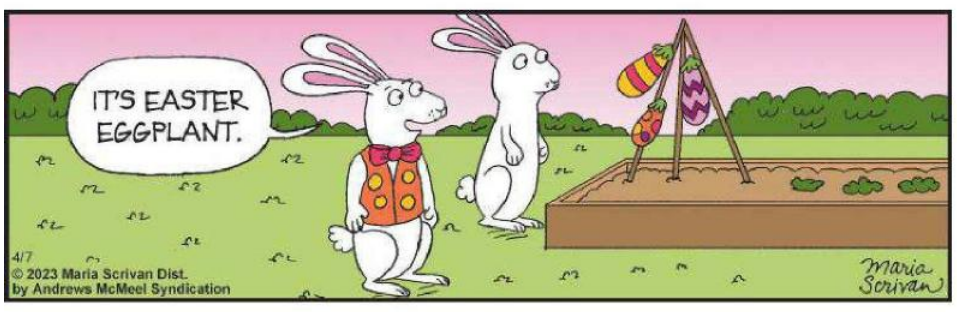
CRABGRASS By Tauhid Bondia

I'M STARTING TO THINK TWO WEEKS IS TOO LONG FOR MILES TO BE GROUNDED.
HERE WE GO...
DON'T DO THAT. I'M SERIOUS, GENE.
SO AM I! I USED TO GET GROUNDED FOR MONTHS, AND I TURNED OUT FINE!
MY MOM GROUNDED ME ONCE WHEN I WAS 14 AND SHE ACTUALLY FORGOT TO UNGROUND ME!
SO... YOU'RE STILL...
WHY DO YOU THINK I NEVER PLAY OUTSIDE?!

CANDORVILLE By Darrin Bell


BRUH... YOU WANT ME TO WHAT?
COME ON, CLYDE. IT WON'T BE LIKE THE OTHER TIMES. TRUST ME. THIS TIME YOU'RE GOING TO LOVE IT.
DOUBTFUL. I DON'T SEE WHY STAR TREK: PICARD SEASON THREE GON' BE ANY MORE LIKABLE THAN SEASONS ONE AN' TWO.
WHAT IF I BUY YOU DINNER FIRST?
BRUH... YOU SOUND DESPERATE.

HALF FULL By Maria Scrivan



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE By Stephan Pastis

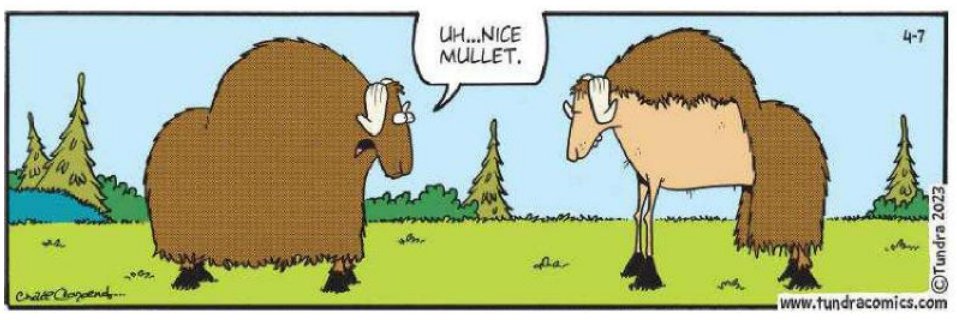
LIO By Mark Tatulli

TRYING TO ESCAPE AN ABUSIVE SITUATION. PLEASE HELP.
MarkTatulli.com gocomics.com
© 2023 Mark Tatulli Distr. by Andrews McMeel Syndication

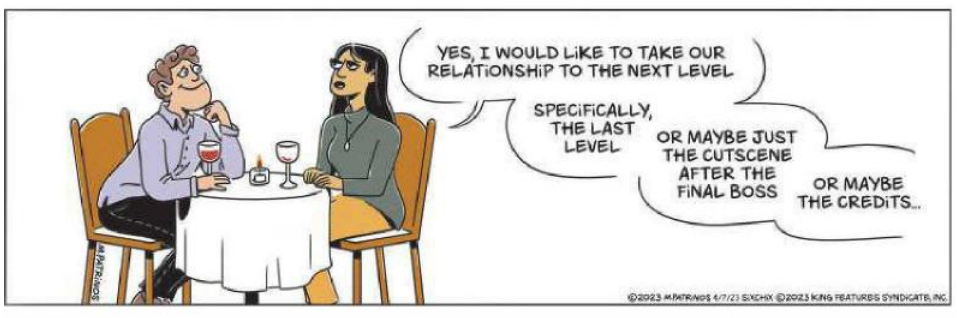
ZITS By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

MOM, DID YOU KNOW DAD WAS A DORK BEFORE YOU MARRIED HIM?
"DORK" IS A HARSH WORD, JEREMY.
LET'S JUST SAY THAT HE'S ALWAYS BEEN A LITTLE AWKWARD AROUND PEOPLE.
LIKE "WANT-TO-SEE-A-MAGIC-TRICK" AWKWARD?
HIS FIRST WORDS TO ME WERE, "PICK A CARD."

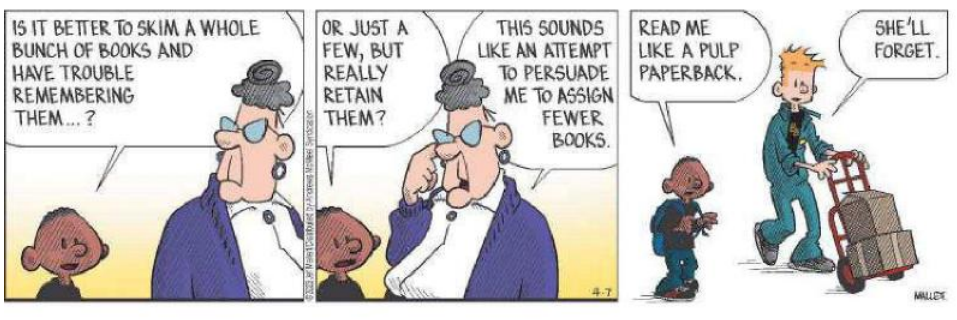
TUNDRA By Chad Carpenter



SIX CHIX By Maritsa Patrinos


YES, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE NEXT LEVEL
SPECIFICALLY, THE LAST LEVEL
OR MAYBE JUST THE CUTSCENE AFTER THE FINAL BOSS
OR MAYBE THE CREDITS..
©2023 M PATRINOS 4/7/23 SIXCHIX ©2023 KING FEATURES SYNDICATE, INC.

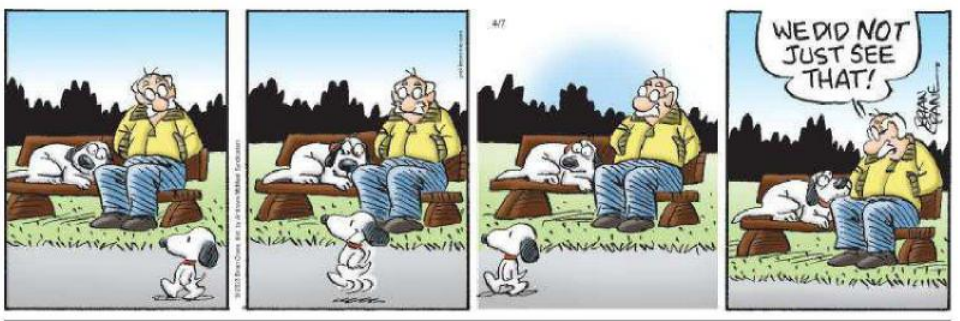
FRAZZ By Jef Mallett


IS IT BETTER TO SKIM A WHOLE BUNCH OF BOOKS AND HAVE TROUBLE REMEMBERING THEM...?
OR JUST A FEW, BUT REALLY RETAIN THEM?
THIS SOUNDS LIKE AN ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE ME TO ASSIGN FEWER BOOKS.
READ ME LIKE A PULP PAPERBACK.
SHE'LL FORGET.

NON SEQUITUR By Wiley

IT'S THE FOUNDATION THAT KEEPS THIS PLACE WORKING THE WAY IT DOES
IMPOSING RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL DOGMA ON EACH OTHER IS ENCOURAGED!
WELCOME
WILEY ©2023 WILEY INK, LTD. 4-7
GOCOMICS.COM/NONSEQUITUR
WILEYINK@EARTHLINK.NET

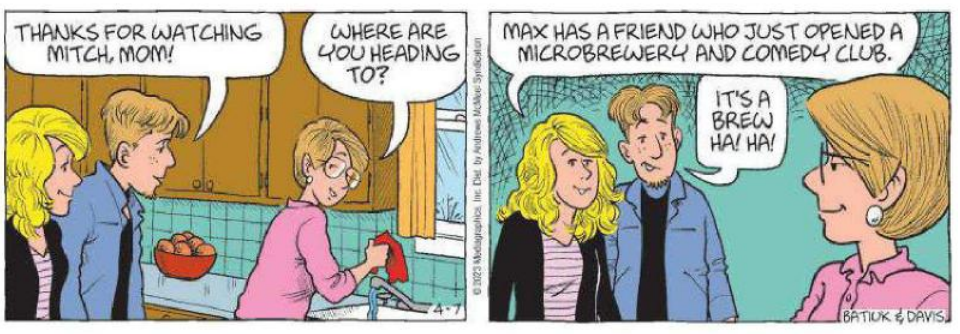
PICKLES By Brian Crane



BABY BLUES By Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman

WAIT! TAKE OFF ANYTHING THAT MIGHT GET ANY DIRT ON THE CARPET!
I WONDER HOW LONG THIS WILL LAST.
PROBABLY FOREVER.
I'M GOOD WITH IT.

CRANKSHAFT By Tom Batiuk & Chuck Ayers


THANKS FOR WATCHING MITCH, MOM!
WHERE ARE YOU HEADING TO?
MAX HAS A FRIEND WHO JUST OPENED A MICROBREWERY AND COMEDY CLUB.
IT'S A BREW HA! HA!
BATIUK & DAVIS

JUMP START By Robb Armstrong

DANA! PUT THAT OUT RIGHT NOW!
IF WE DON'T FOLLOW THE RULES, HOW CAN WE EXPECT OTHER-
MARCY, LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY DISABLED THE SCENTED CANDLE DETECTOR!
www.gocomics.com

MACANUDO By Liniers

I HAVE SEEN THE SHOW THAT EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT.
AND I LISTENED TO THE PODCAST.
AND I WATCHED THE INTERVIEWS WITH THE ACTORS AND CREATORS.
AND?
I STILL DON'T GET IT.

BLONDIE By Dean Young & John Marshall

THE BOSS HAD A NEW VENDING MACHINE INSTALLED IN THE BREAK ROOM TODAY
THAT'S NICE
MAYBE, BUT I THINK HE DID IT TO SEND A MESSAGE TO ME
IT'S STOCKED WITH NOTHING BUT ENERGY DRINKS LOADED WITH TONS OF CAFFEINE
4-7

BETWEEN FRIENDS By Sandra Bell-Lundy

WHAT ARE WE DOING, MAEVE?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I WANT TO RETIRE SO I CAN BE WITH YOU... I DON'T WANT A LONG-DISTANCE RELATIONSHIP ANYMORE
STEVE- I'm NOT READY FOR A PERMANENT RELATIONSHIP... I LIKE THINGS THE WAY THEY ARE - WHAT'S THE RUSH?!
WE'RE IN OUR FIFTIES!

BIZARRO By Wayno and Piraro

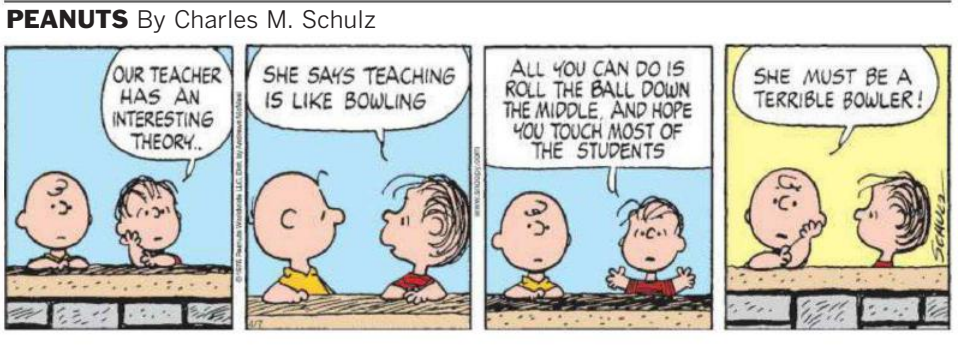
I hear they do things differently since we left the Department of Corrections.
TYPE B.GONE
BOTTLED PAPER
Big Pinkie
Wayno & Piraro 4-7-23
Dist. by King Features BIZARRO.COM
©2023 BIZARRO STUDIOS

DRABBLE By Kevin Fagan

MUTTS By Patrick McDonnell

WHAT'S UP, MOOCH?
WELL, IT'S RAINING; IT'S POURING. THE OLD MAN IS SHNORING.
WHY?
HE BUMPED HIS HEAD AND WENT TO BED AND HE COULDN'T GET UP IN THE MORNING.
AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT I HEARD.
mutts.com
4-7

PEANUTS By Charles M. Schulz


OUR TEACHER HAS AN INTERESTING THEORY..
SHE SAYS TEACHING IS LIKE BOWLING
ALL YOU CAN DO IS ROLL THE BALL DOWN THE MIDDLE, AND HOPE YOU TOUCH MOST OF THE STUDENTS
SHE MUST BE A TERRIBLE BOWLER!
SCHULZ

Got advice straight from the source

ELIZABETH MORRIS Hulu

OF KATHRYN HAHN, Liz Tigelaar says: "I was watching somebody inhabit a character at the highest level."

[**Tigelaar,** from E1]
messy and heartbreaking conundrums by mining her own experiences. They were the basis for the 2012 collection of essays "Tiny Beautiful Things: Advice on Love and Life From Dear Sugar." (She later revived the column as a podcast and, more recently, as a newsletter.)

In the new Hulu series, titled "Tiny Beautiful Things," Tigelaar avoided the temptation of having the letter writers be a character in each episode in orbit of its protagonist, Clare Pierce, played by Kathryn Hahn in the present and Sarah Pidgeon in the past, choosing instead to build out the memoir element of the essays.

"I'm almost less curious about how she finds the advice in the present day, externally," says Tigelaar, a self-described Strayed super fan. "How does she find the advice inside of her from what she's already gone through? And how do we bring those stories to the front? It ended up being constructed where maybe the letter writer didn't need to appear."

In a video call this week, Tigelaar discussed what it was like having Strayed in the writers room, deciding what letters would help drive the narrative, and the joy and heartbreak of passion projects like "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" and a shelved limited series on Tonya Harding.

Before we fully get into things, can we just start by talking about the wonder that is Kathryn Hahn?

I was watching somebody inhabit a character at the highest level; every ad lib, every way, she did it a little differently. This was a part that was ambitious with a lot to navigate, and to see somebody giving such a gutsy performance and being so unafraid was such a joy. I mean, when she lays on the ground in a scene, and she's just like, "I am not OK" in a way only she can — I mean, I think every woman gets that.

You're telling a version of Cheryl Strayed's story, but you've named the protagonist Clare Pierce. What prompted that decision?

We talked a lot about that. In "Wild," Reese Witherspoon played Cheryl Strayed. [Witherspoon, who worked with Tigelaar on "Little Fires Everywhere," is an executive producer on the series.] And we really wanted the freedom. Cheryl is Clare's age living a version of Clare's life. So am I. We didn't want to imply that this was autobiographical. We're depicting Cheryl's marriage now, Cheryl's children now. I named her Clare and we started to think of the version of her. It was like: This is Cheryl had she *not* hiked the Pacific Crest Trail, this is Cheryl had she not become that writer that she and her mother believed that she could be. And it was funny because after I named her Clare, Cheryl said, "I was Claire in 'Torch.' " "Torch" was a fictionalized version of Cheryl without the PCT. I read it right after "Wild." I had not remembered that she was Claire. But I love that she was Claire there and Clare here.

Nia Vardalos adapted the book for the stage and she said that the material was life-changing for her. Did it feed something in you at the right time?

I've basically spent a year not only doing something that was, to me — especially for a half-hour series — a very narratively ambitious story and a very structurally ambitious story. And not knowing, like, are people going to get it? Are people going to like it? Or is it too ambitious with all of these things? But to do this huge creative endeavor for this person who I love, whose stories have saved me, and to do it *beside* that person encouraging you the whole time? Who could be in better hands?

Tell me more about that. In addition to having the book as a resource, what was the collaboration like with Cheryl?

In the very beginning, she said, "Could I come into the writers room? Can I be a part of it?" And I was like, "Absolutely!" And at first I told the writers, "Cheryl Strayed is going to be in the writers room." And I think some people were a little bit trepidatious, like, "The author is going to be there, are we going to be able to really dissect it?" And it was not like that. She has these rich stories and then she has these rich stories *within* those stories. We optioned an essay of hers called "The Love of My Life," which was the foundation of Episode 5, this flashback story of how she and her mom went to college together and her mom died on spring break their senior year. So we mined so much of her writing and experience as a writer.

It's not quite the same as the "Dear Sugar" community and others like it, but I do find myself pulled into a specific corner of social media, drawn to people being vulnerable and sharing aspects of their lives and the conundrums they face. It's a weird thing to be invested in people you've never met and want to see how they've moved through a similar experience you're going through. What has this process illuminated for you about the human desire to have a path lit in some way?

Do you ever listen to "We Can Do Hard Things"? It's the Glennon Doyle podcast that she hosts with her wife, Abby Wambach [the soccer player], and her sister, Amanda Doyle. It's my "Dear Sugar" replacement right now. Glennon and Cheryl are very different, but they have similarities, which is that they don't act as if they're on a pedestal above you doling out wisdom. You feel their struggle, and that they're grappling and that they are trying to make sense of the world that we all inhabit and are trying to make sense of, so there's this huge commonality. It's so comforting having this deep wisdom and perspective on the world that we have to navigate, and how to kind of feel our way through it. There's more access to get windows into things. When I was younger, you didn't have a window into it. I think what Cheryl does so well is that she, she says to people, "I'm not telling you anything you don't know; I'm just validating the answer that's already inside of you that you know, but maybe wish you didn't know."

How did you decide which questions to include in the show to drive the narrative?

That was hard because there were so many good ones. I knew "Tiny Beautiful Things" had to be the first one. I knew "Like an Iron Bell" was the finale because I was pretty sure I wanted to tell the beginning, the middle and the end of her mother's life. And then I knew I wanted to jump around and not be quite so linear. I tried to hold to the idea that it was OK to not know exactly where you were in the timeline, and that what you just needed to experience was the story of that episode and how it related to the letter in the present. But I think there were just iconic letters

'Tiny Beautiful Things'

Where: Hulu
When: Anytime
Rating: TV-MA (may be unsuitable for children under the age of 17)

— "The Ghost Ship That Didn't Carry Us" was a for-sure, the woman who writes in about her daughter in the pediatric NICU, and this question of faith felt so important. We tried to really hit those iconic ones.

One of the more striking sequences of the series comes near the end. It's this harrowing moment where you transition from Clare and Lucas [Nick Stahl] arguing about their childhood home in the present day to flashbacks of them arguing about his absence in the aftermath of their mother's fatal diagnosis. What did you want out of that sequence?

I love this idea of how all our selves live inside of us. So, no matter what age we are, I'm not just 47; I'm 46 and 45 and 44 and 43 — every age is still within me. In any moment, you can be jostled back to that age. And when you're fighting with somebody, when you're fighting with your younger brother, you're suddenly the age of these very primal wounds. I wanted to show that it wasn't just these two adults fighting over this childhood home, and their dad's intrusion, that it was two vulnerable teenagers who were trying to hold something that they did not want to let go. And how we could move around and feel that. It's probably the scene that scared me the most. But I wanted all the flashbacks that had preceded it to build toward that and especially in that final episode. The backstory was completely Cheryl's life and experience.

What did Cheryl think of the ending? We get this dreamlike sequence of Clare and her mother.

I think she loved it because she was right there with us crafting it. I think it was hard to be on set and watch the most painful moments of her life acted out. It's part of a journey of healing and catharsis. To see how far she's come from that 22-year-old and how much she has had to find her way — and how she wasn't Clare; she became something different.

You've now adapted several works. In addition to this one, there's Celeste Ng's "Little Fires Everywhere," there will be Judy Blume's "Summer Sisters." What have you come to appreciate about the process of adapting other people's work that maybe you struggled with in the beginning?

I feel so fortunate to be at a point in my career where I can work on the things that I'm a fan of. I mean, Judy Blume's "Summer Sisters" — I wrote her a letter when I was 22. I told her why I should adapt it even though I was a writer's assistant on "Dawson's Creek." I love collaborating with authors because I love their stories, and I want them to have an amazing experience in the adaptation process. I want them to see something that they love brought to light in this different medium. One thing I've learned is that not every author wants the same thing. Celeste wanted to visit the room — she didn't necessarily want to be in it — but we had really extensive creative conversations up top so she knew exactly what I was doing, and then she could give notes on scripts as we went through. Cheryl wanted to be *in* the room. And that was perfect too.

You're also set to adapt "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" into a feature film for Netflix. Where are you at in that process? And how would you describe that collaboration with Taylor Jenkins Reid?

I finished the script right before "Tiny Beautiful Things," actually. And that was incredible. That was the same experience where I read the book, I talked to Taylor and I couldn't believe that it was somehow coming my way. It felt so resonant for me, that story, in terms of my own marriage and relationship and understanding that on just a really deep level. I just thought the story was epic. Once I was done with my draft, she came in and did her pass, which was awesome. We wanted to make sure that the screenplay felt like Taylor, that it felt like the voice of the book. And it did. She's so artful and she has such a gentle touch, but I felt that kind of elevated the script to that level. I think they're in director stages now.

BookTok has many opinions on who should be cast.

I'm always tagged in stuff that's pushing Jessica Chastain — she's probably like, "Who the f— is Liz Tigelaar?" Also, Brittany Snow. I love that people love it. They should. The book is incredible.

I want to pivot to another project of yours. I read your recent interview in the Hollywood Reporter, and in it you mentioned a passion project of yours, which was a Tonya Harding limited series that got scrapped. And all I could think was: What have I been denied?

Something great. You have been denied, the world has been denied.

Is there no way to revive this project? Can you tell me more about it, the tone it had — something?

First of all, this was Amy Talkington's. She had written a feature called "The Ice Queens" and right as she finished it, "I, Tonya" got set up. And so Larry Salz, our mutual agent at UTA, was like, "What about making it a limited series?" And so I met with Amy. This was her genius that I got to come onto. We basically set it up as a six-episode limited series. We wrote all the episodes with another writer, Rosa Handelman, who I wrote with on "Casual" and "Little Fires Everywhere." It was Tonya Harding as feminist icon. It was a lot about how violence begets violence. It really examined the whole story from Tonya Harding's perspective, not in any way making Tonya Harding the butt of the joke. It was more like: Put yourself in the heart and mind of her and now look at everything from her perspective — and how does the story change? Why has it not been set up? I don't know. There's six perfect scripts. I've never had so much fun.

When you said in that interview that one episode opened with Connie Chung and Maury Povich having sex, I was just like, "Wait, what?"

Oh, yeah. Each episode had a unique teaser that would set the time, and one of our episodes opens with a sex scene between them. Maury Povich is hands-down the most likable man in the entire series. You're like, "Maury Povich is our male North Star?" It's amazing. It's such a pop culture examination. I'm like: Hulu, this is gold on a silver platter, let's go! FX, come on!

Princess Peach breaks through the old 'Bros.' club

Nintendo

ANYA TAYLOR-JOY plays a Princess Peach with more agency than is depicted in the "Mario" games.

[**Princess,** from E1]
Over the years, Princess Peach has achieved playable character status more frequently, usually in spinoffs like the "Mario Kart" series of racing games, the "Super Smash Bros." series of fighting games and various "Mario"-branded sports games.

Perhaps as a result of her usual second-class status in the "Mario Bros." universe, I always hated when people tried to make me play as Peach — even in "Super Mario Bros. 2," where her ability to briefly float makes her the superior choice.

Long before I became aware of things like the "damsel in distress" trope, I knew that I did not want to be Princess Peach. In fact, I did not want to be a girl at all, if being a girl meant being like Princess Peach.

Games like "Super Mario Bros." prioritize gameplay, meaning the point is to enjoy the experience of making it through various levels, unlocking surprises along the way. As a result, there is minimal plot and the characters have limited backstories; they are instead designed as avatars on which you can project your own ideas.

For me, that meant Mario, as the primary playable character, was the relatable, aspirational one — a heroic little dude who gains powers by coming into contact with various items and ultimately saves the day. Luigi, Mario's brother and the other playable character from the beginning of the "Super Mario Bros." franchise, is like Mario but less exciting. Waiting for your turn as "Player 2" is agony! Plus, as the oldest child, I was not going to be anybody's little brother.

The princess was even worse. All she did was wait to be rescued. And if, like me, you never made it to the end of "Super Mario Bros.," you never even got to see her. Even if you did, all one could glean about her existence was that she wore a dress and did nothing. Not exactly the backstory of an iconic character. (I also considered having to wear a dress a form of punishment, so the association did not help her cause.)

Now, with the benefit of hindsight, I can understand my aversion to Peach and her pink dress — and have even learned to appreciate her.

After all, as a kid, I did not have the language to convey why gender, or the gendered categories others tried to force me into, felt so constricting. The only way to push back at the time was to reject femininity, or objects I associated with femininity, altogether, including the most feminine character I knew: Princess Peach.

With the games' post-8-bit evolution, the "Super Mario Bros." characters started to manifest distinct personalities — Mario is cheery and tenacious; Luigi is a bit of a scaredy-cat — and Peach no longer seems so dull, her supposedly gentle demeanor marked by her fair share of quirks. Peach has been shown wielding her parasol as a weapon and initiating mid-battle tea breaks in installments from the broader world of "Mario" games and crossovers. She's sometimes even blasé about her repeated abductions.

"The Super Mario Bros. Movie" draws from and occasionally subverts these familiar characteristics. Its Peach is more an empowered princess imagined for the current age. She's a respected ruler willing to engage in diplomacy as much as battle in order to protect her subjects and her Mushroom Kingdom. She's not at all intimidated by Bowser, a fire-breathing bully with a big army. And not only has she already mastered all the skills Mario needs to learn in order to survive his confrontation with their reptilian foe, she can do everything while wearing heels. This Peach is who you want saving you.

It also helps that I now understand the gender you are assigned at birth does not have to be your destiny: Gender is a spectrum and there is no right or wrong way to express it, no matter what culture or "tradition" or even legislation tries to tell you.

That hasn't made it easier to stomach "Super Mario Bros." and other popular media that reinforce the idea that feminine characters are weak objects of desire, mostly kept around to be kidnapped or saved. And we shouldn't be appeased that the alternatives offered to this narrative are predominantly stories where women's strength comes at the expense of their femininity or with the expectation to ooze sex appeal, either.

But it has made it easier to embrace Peach and her signature pink dress. You still won't ever catch me in one, but that's not a knock on the princess — it just means it's not for me.

Plus, she seems plenty comfortable in it in "The Super Mario Bros. Movie." It certainly doesn't sex her up or slow her down. So let the world of "Mario" keep its high-femme icon dressed to the nines.

As long as she's the one doing the rescuing.